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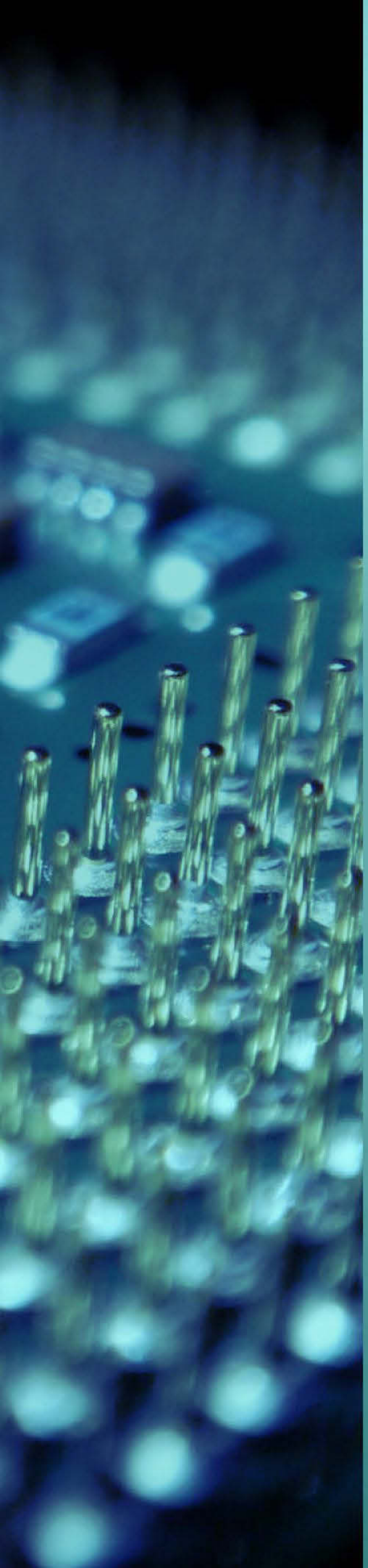
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YAHOO CHOOSES TO STAY WITH MICROSOFT IN UPDATED SEARCH DEAL



Yahoo and Microsoft will keep working together on Internet search, but Yahoo is getting more control over the how the search results are presented.

An agreement announced Thursday extends a search partnership that Yahoo Inc. and Microsoft Corp. forged in 2009 while they were being led by different CEOs. Current Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer had the option of terminating the relationship under a clause triggered earlier this year.

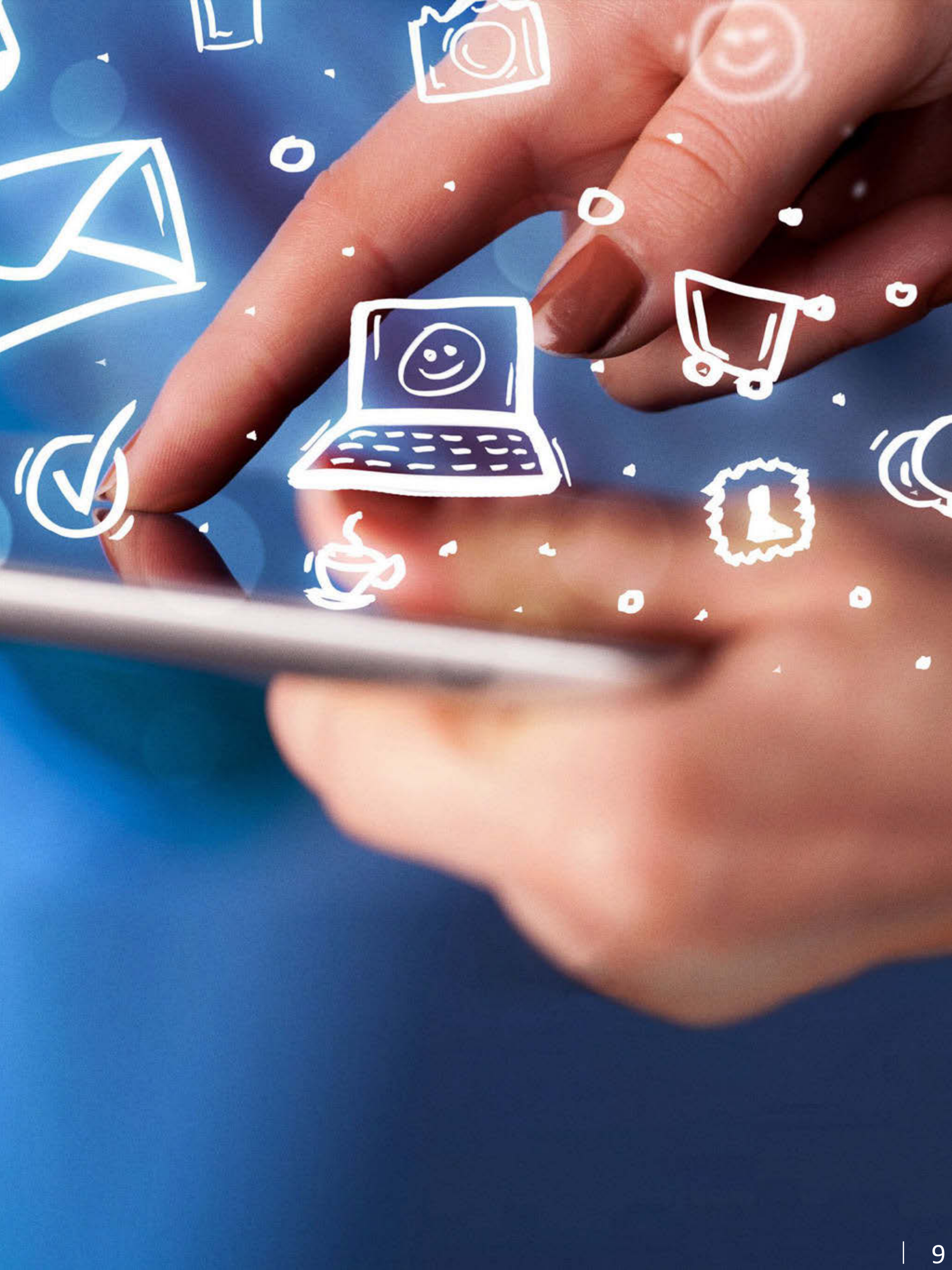


Image: Olivier Le Moal



The two are trying to chip away at Google's dominance of Internet searches. They haven't had much success so far. Google still controls two-thirds of the U.S. search market and holds an even larger share in Europe. Mayer spent 12 years helping Google build its lucrative lead in before becoming Yahoo's CEO in 2011.

As has been the case since the companies formed their alliance, Microsoft's technology will power most of the search results on Yahoo's sites. In return, Yahoo will receive most of the revenue from the ads posted alongside the search results on its sites.




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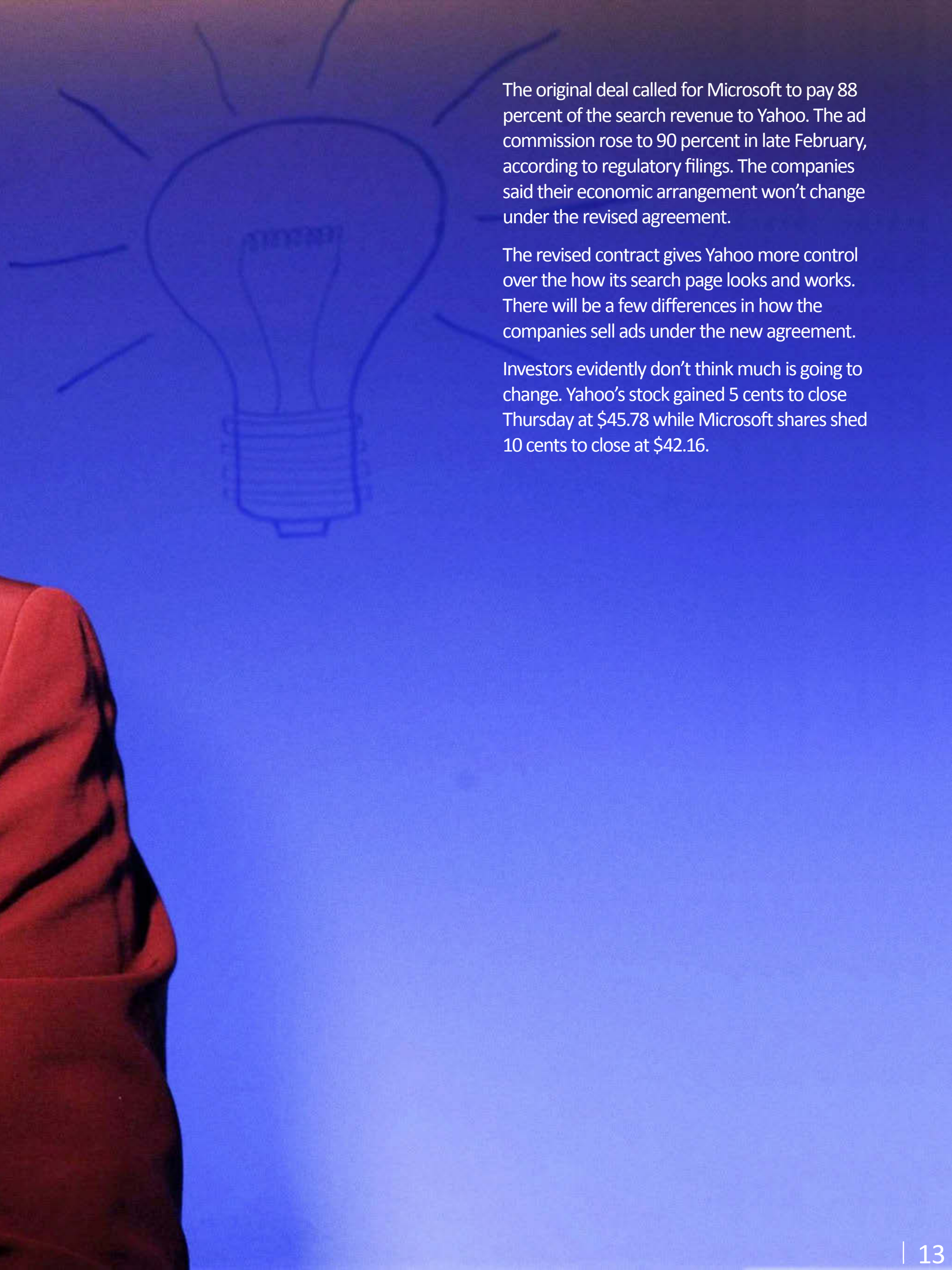
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The original deal called for Microsoft to pay 88 percent of the search revenue to Yahoo. The ad commission rose to 90 percent in late February, according to regulatory filings. The companies said their economic arrangement won't change under the revised agreement.

The revised contract gives Yahoo more control over the how its search page looks and works. There will be a few differences in how the companies sell ads under the new agreement.

Investors evidently don't think much is going to change. Yahoo's stock gained 5 cents to close Thursday at $45.78 while Microsoft shares shed 10 cents to close at $42.16.





‘STAR WARS’ DESIGN TEAM TEASES ‘FORCE AWAKENS’ THEMES

“Star Wars: The Force Awakens” is about a generational transfer in more ways than one. Set 30 years after the events in “Return of the Jedi” and coming to theaters just over 30 years after the film first debuted, that idea remained top of mind for the film’s brand new production design team, fans learned at Star Wars Celebration on Saturday.

In other words, they didn’t have to reinvent the wheel. They just had to update it a bit.

Rick Carter, an Academy Award winner for “Lincoln” and “Avatar,” was joined on stage by his co-production designer Darren Gilford (“TRON: Legacy”), Doug Chiang (“Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace”), and Industrial Light + Magic Art Director Christian Alzmann (“A.I. Artificial Intelligence”) to discuss their work together on the seventh film in the “Star Wars” saga.

While the artists couldn’t reveal any specifics about the plot, they did treat a packed auditorium to a few revelations about modernizing aesthetics of everything from the X-wing fighters to the Millennium Falcon.





"Seven comes after six. It doesn't come after three," said Carter, referring to the poorly received prequels. "This is a period piece that we're bringing forth. We're always going back to go forward."

Indeed, at the insistence of director J.J. Abrams, the team relied on the original art of illustrator Ralph McQuarrie to inform the aesthetic of "The Force Awakens."

The early trailers for the film, out Dec. 18, reveal a dirty, grungier world. Droids and ships are beat up and run down in the desert landscape, much like they were in the original films.

"We wanted to play tribute to Ralph McQuarrie. When we got stuck on something, we would go back and look at what he'd done before. It's come full circle," said Chiang.

Alzmann said there was even talk about creating "What Would Ralph Do" bracelets for the design team.

They had access to the extensive Lucasfilm archives to answer even the minutest questions. Sometimes that backfired. When Abrams told the team that he wanted the Millennium Falcon to look identical to the way it did in the originals, they realized there were actually three versions.

In the end, using elements of all three, they created the "quintessential fan version" of what the ship should be.

Even the designers themselves saw themselves as part of this generational shift in ushering George Lucas's original vision to the big screen.

Gilford, whose father illustrated the "Star Wars" cover of a 1977 issue of magazine Cinefantastique, said that even working out of Pinewood Studios in London connected the production to the past.

There he encountered many people who had either worked on the original films or had relatives who did.

Continuing with Abrams' oft-stated goal of building as much as possible instead of relying on sterilized computer graphics, the team discussed the idea that less was more.

"You can have all of this fancy stuff and a sci-fi movie is whatever it wants to be. Everyone is trying to outgun each other. This isn't about that. This is about the force," said Carter. He said they had entire brainstorms trying to answer one question: "What would frighten us if the dark side came back?"

Carter remained cryptically informative.

"It's right in front of you. This is the movie. It's going from a deep level up. It's confident because there's a real story to be told," he said of the second teaser trailer, which premiered on Thursday during the Celebration kick-off.

He added: "When we say the force awakens it is the dark side and the light side."

MARK HAMILL SAID HE WAS 'SUSPICIOUS' OF J.J. ABRAMS

Mark Hamill knew he had to say yes when George Lucas told him about the plans to move forward with a new "Star Wars" trilogy.

"It's not like a choice. It's like I was drafted," Hamill told a massive crowd Saturday night at Star Wars Celebration of his decision to reprise his role as Luke Skywalker in the "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

"Could you imagine if for some reason I said `I don't think I want to do it?' I would have all of you surrounding my house like villagers, angry villagers with lightsabers instead of torches," joked the 63-year-old "Star Wars" veteran.

Hamill admitted he was caught off guard when Lucas invited him to lunch. When Hamill's wife surmised that perhaps there was a new film in the works, Hamill laughed. Lucas had told him





specifically that he was done making “Star Wars” movies after the prequels.

He assumed Lucas was going to announce a 3-D release or roll out another box set of the films, laughing about the number of versions that have been made available.

Still, his interest was piqued when Lucas disinvited Hamill’s daughter. He knew that meant it must be big.

When things started coming together, Hamill said he was cautiously optimistic about J.J. Abrams, the chosen director for “The Force Awakens.”

“I was a little suspicious because he was a `Star Trek’ guy,” said Hamill, laughing.

The actor quickly clarified that he likes “Star Trek.”

“It just seems odd,” he said.

He went on to compliment Abrams for his inclusiveness. Abrams, Hamill noted, is also the first “Star Wars” director to be borne out of true fandom of the original films.

“He feels the way you feel in terms of wanting practical effects. Real sets,” he said.

Keeping in line with the secrecy surrounding “The Force Awakens,” which opens on Dec. 18, Hamill said he is always worried about leaking information. He claims he even learned the subtitle of the seventh film on the Internet.

“They’re so secretive these days,” said Hamill. “When we did the first one no one cared.”

Hamill was “cleared” to tell the packed house that he did record a voiceover specifically for the new teaser trailer, which debuted on Thursday during the Celebration kick-off panel.

In the teaser, we hear Luke’s voice saying a familiar, but slightly altered line from “Return of the Jedi”: “The force is strong in my family. My father has it. I have it. My sister has it. You have that power too.”


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He laughed and said that he kept messing up and saying: “My father had it.”

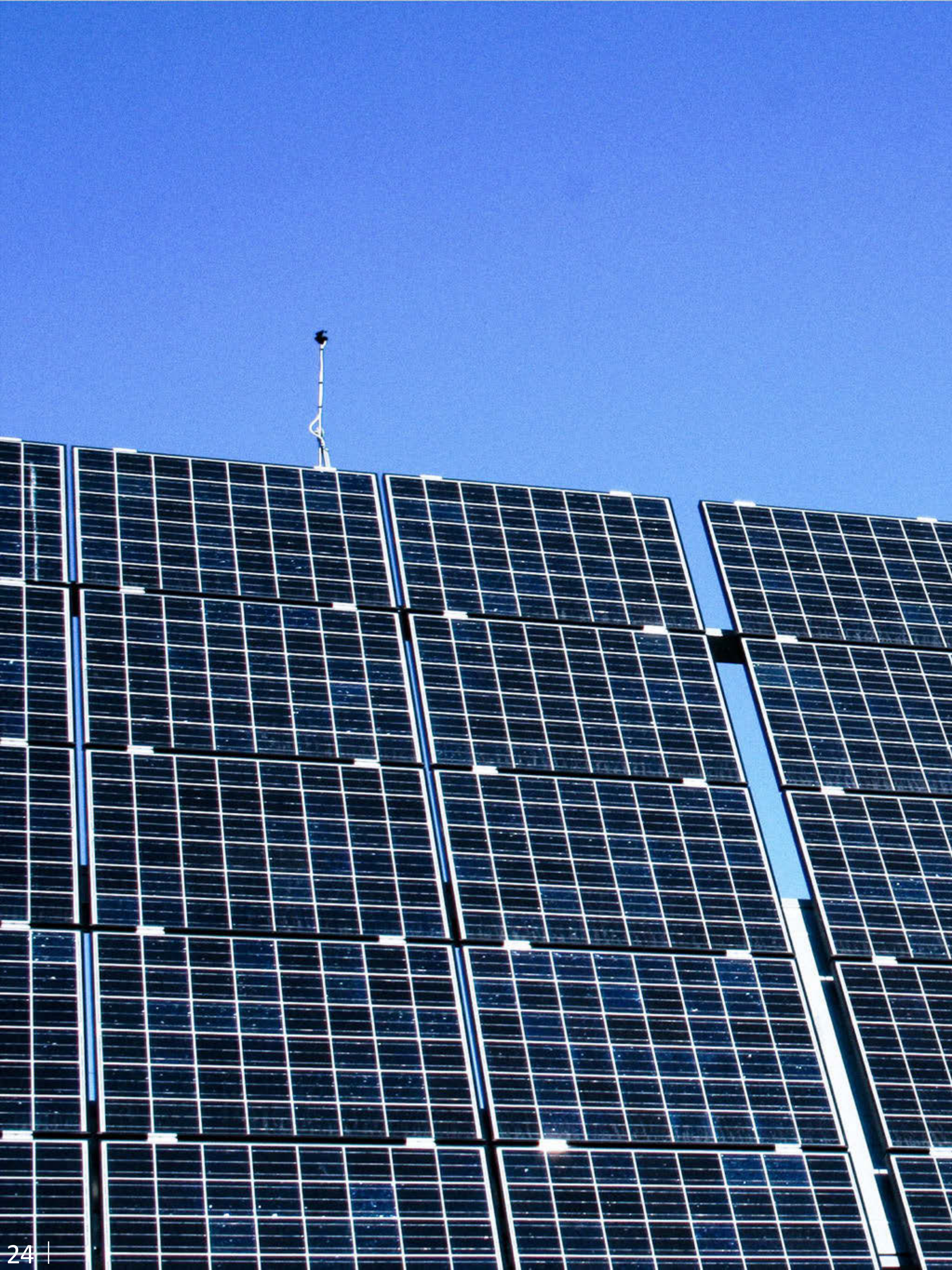
The end result is a combination of the original recording and Hamill’s new session, the actor said.

After playing the trailer once more in the large arena, Hamill marveled that there is “so much information there for you to speculate about” embedded in the footage.

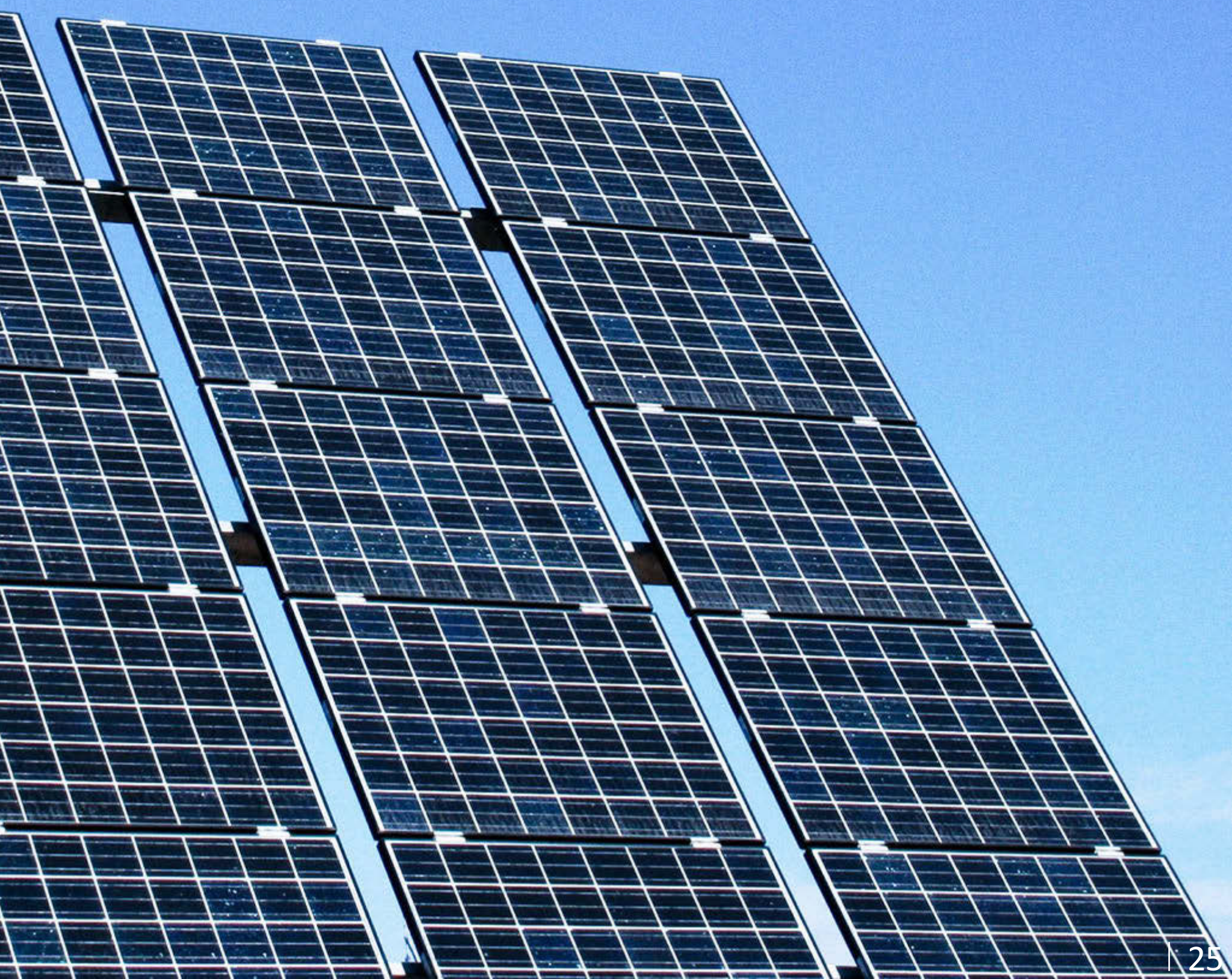
“It implies so much that’s gone on from `Jedi’ till now,” he said.

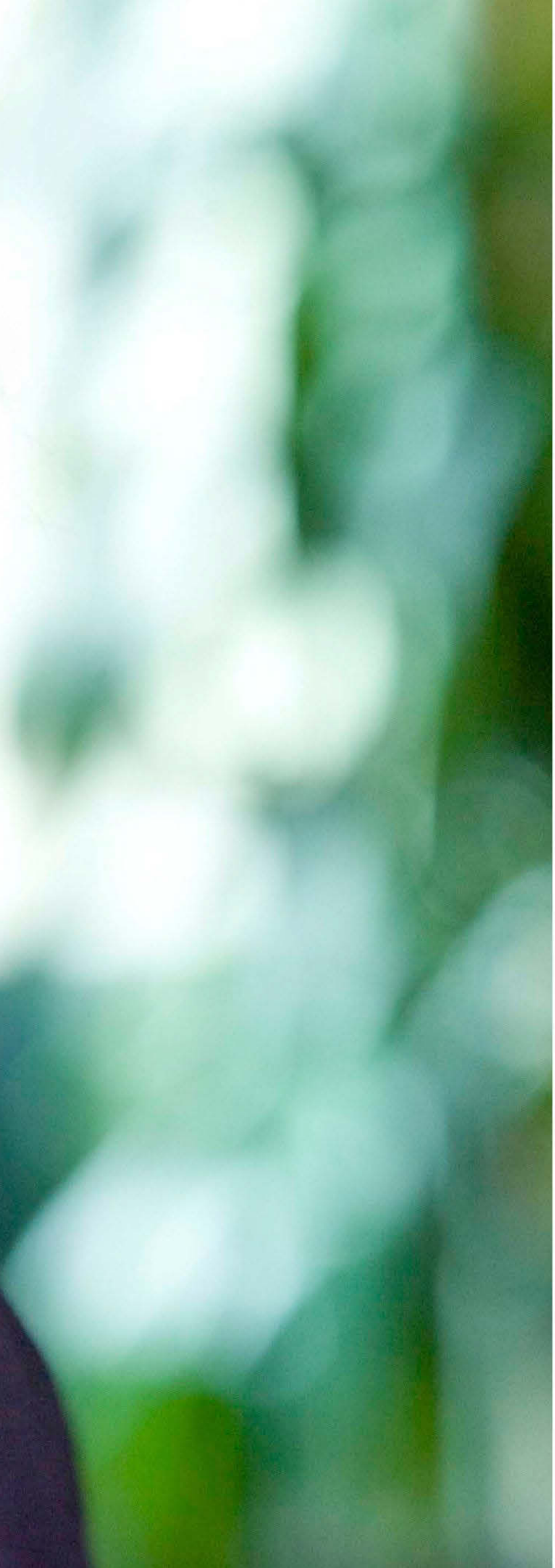
“They don’t call it a teaser for nothing. They want to tease you.”

Online: **http://www.starwars.com**



APPLE DIGS IN ON GREEN WITH CHINA SOLAR, US FOREST PROJECTS





In a quest to be more green, Apple says it is investing in Chinese solar power and preserving forests that make environmentally friendly paper.

The initiatives come as the tech giant this year met a self-imposed goal of powering all its U.S. operations with renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions - initiatives that have won high marks from environmental groups.

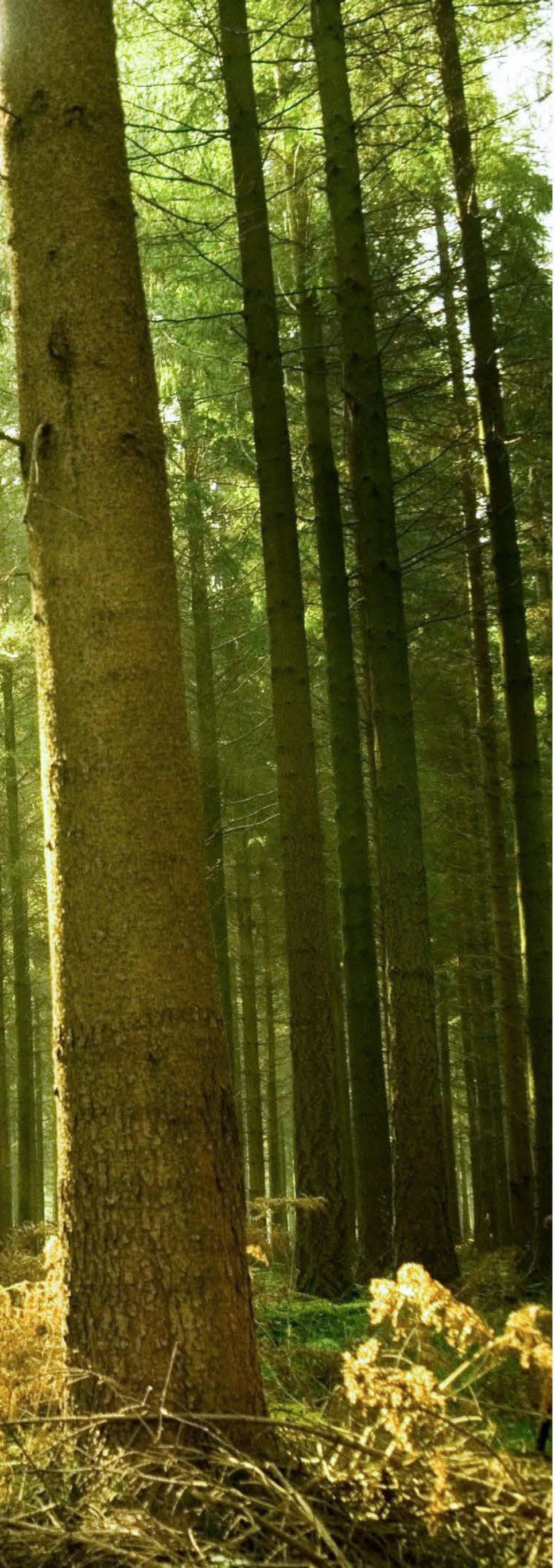
On Thursday, Apple announced a new focus on using paper from trees harvested under environmentally sound conditions. It's also promising to use more renewable power overseas, where Apple relies heavily on contract manufacturers - and where a top executive acknowledged the company can do more.

"It's important to us to tackle climate change everywhere we are," Lisa Jackson, Apple's vice president for environmental initiatives, told The Associated Press. "When you talk about China, you're talking about manufacturing partners. We're looking to bring the same innovation there. This is the start."

The new solar project in China has a capacity of 40 megawatts, which is smaller than some projects Apple has announced in the United States. By comparison, Apple is spending $850 million for rights to nearly half the output of a 280-megawatt solar facility planned for construction south of Apple's Cupertino, California, headquarters. That project will produce enough energy to power all of Apple's California offices, a computer center and 52 retail stores.

Still, the Chinese project will produce more than the amount of energy consumed by Apple's 19 corporate offices and 21 retail stores in China and Hong Kong, Jackson said. She added that Apple uses renewable energy for 87 percent of the power at its facilities worldwide.

That figure, however, doesn't include substantial power consumption by contract manufacturers. With the new project in China, Apple is looking to improve its own operations first.



"Before we go somewhere else and start asking and eventually requiring clean energy, you want to make sure you show folks how to do it," said Jackson, who was U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator during President Barack Obama's first term.

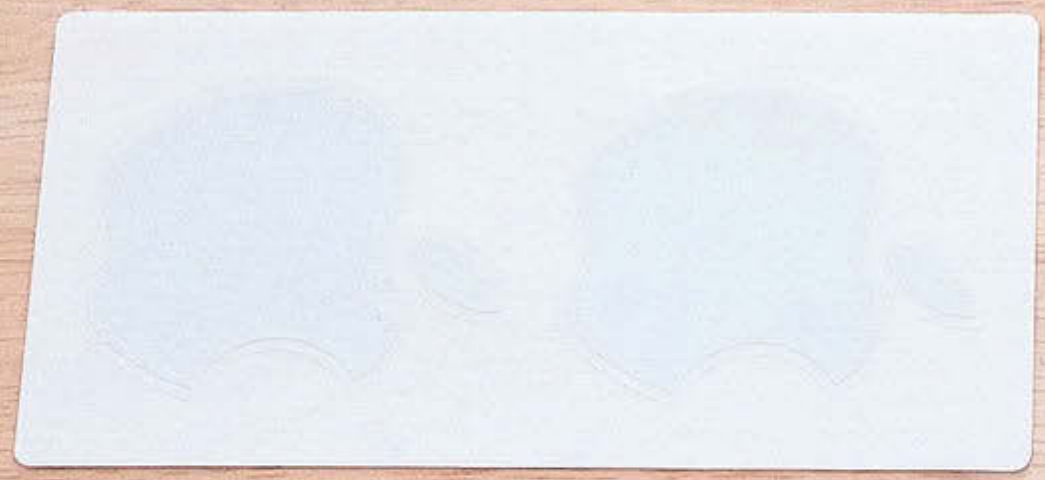
Apple and other tech companies have drawn criticism in the past for use of toxics in manufacturing and data centers powered by electricity from coal. But Apple's moves away from those practices in recent years have won accolades from groups like Greenpeace, which issued a statement praising the Chinese project Thursday.

Jackson declined to say how much Apple is investing in the Chinese project, which is being built in partnership with U.S. energy company SunPower and four Chinese firms. Although China is known for heavy reliance on coal, its government has set aggressive goals for solar, wind and hydroelectric power.

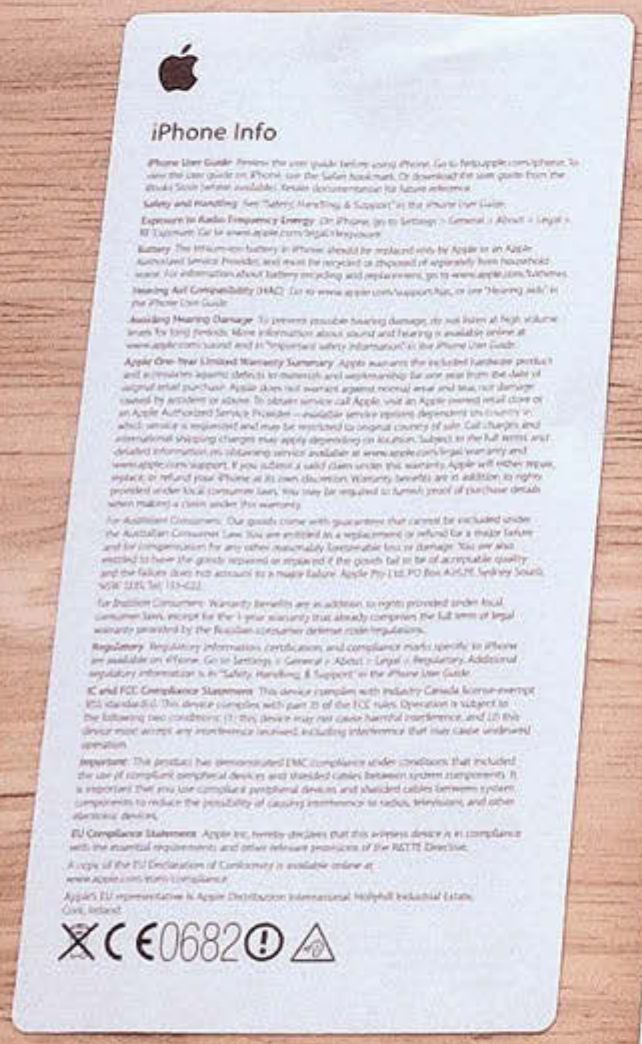
Meanwhile, Apple pledged an unspecified amount of money for a Virginia-based nonprofit, the Conservation Fund, to purchase two large tracts of timberland on the East Coast. The Conservation Fund will resell the land - 36,000 acres of timberland in Maine and North Carolina - to commercial interests under legally binding terms that require future owners to preserve the forest and follow environmentally sound principles for cutting and replanting trees.

Larry Selzer, the group's chief executive, said that will protect the forest while keeping it in the hands of private owners who pay taxes and create jobs. Selzer said he'll use proceeds from reselling the land to buy and protect additional tracts.

Apple won't necessarily buy paper made from trees on that land, but Jackson said the investment will increase the supply of sustainable wood fiber. She said the two tracts would produce about half the non-recycled wood fiber used in Apple's product packaging last year.







iPhone Info

iPhone User Guide: *Review the user guide before using iPhone. Go to* ***help.apple.com/iphone****. To view the user guide on iPhone, use the Safari bookmark. Or download the user guide from the iBooks Store (where available). Retain documentation for future reference.*

Safety and Handling: *See "Safety, Handling, & Support" in the iPhone User Guide.*

Exposure to Radio Frequency Energy: *On iPhone, go to Settings > General > About > Legal > RF Exposure. Or go to www.apple.com/legal/rfexposure.*

Battery: *The lithium-ion battery in iPhone should be replaced only by Apple or an Apple Authorized Service Provider, and must be recycled or disposed of separately from household waste. For information about battery recycling and replacement, go to www.apple.com/batteries.*

Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC): *Go to www.apple.com/support/hac, or see "Hearing aids" in the iPhone User Guide.*

Avoiding Hearing Damage: *To prevent possible hearing damage, do not listen at high volume levels for long periods. More information about sound and hearing is available online at www.apple.com/sound, and in "Important safety information" in the iPhone User Guide.*

Apple One-Year Limited Warranty Summary: *Apple warrants the included hardware product and accessories against defects in materials and workmanship for one year from the date of original retail purchase. Apple does not warrant against normal wear and tear, nor damage caused by accident or abuse. To obtain service call Apple, visit an Apple-owned retail store or an Apple Authorized Service Provider—available service options, dependent on country in which service is requested, and may be restricted to original country of sale. Call charges and international shipping charges may apply depending on location. Subject to the full terms and detailed information on obtaining service available at www.apple.com/legal/warranty and www.apple.com/support. If you submit a valid claim under this warranty, Apple will either repair, replace, or refund your iPhone at its own discretion. Warranty benefits are in addition to rights provided under local consumer laws. You may be required to furnish proof of purchase details when making a claim under this warranty.*

For Australian Consumers: Our goods come with guarantees that cannot be excluded under the Australian Consumer Law. You are entitled to a replacement or refund for a major failure and for compensation for any other reasonably foreseeable loss or damage. You are also entitled to have the goods repaired or replaced if the goods fail to be of acceptable quality and the failure does not amount to a major failure. Apple Pty Ltd, PO Box A2629, Sydney South, NSW 1235, Tel: 133-622.

For Brazilian Consumers: Warranty benefits are in addition to rights provided under local consumer laws, except for the 1-year warranty that already comprises the full term of legal warranty provided by the Brazilian consumer defense code regulations.

Regulatory: *Regulatory information, certifications, and compliance marks specific to iPhone are available on iPhone. Go to Settings > General > About > Legal > Regulatory. Additional regulatory information is in "Safety, Handling, & Support" in the iPhone User Guide.*

IC and FCC Compliance Statement: *This device complies with Industry Canada license-exempt RSS standard(s). This device complies with part 15 of the FCC rules. Operation is subject to the following two conditions: (1) this device may not cause harmful interference, and (2) this device must accept any interference received, including interference that may cause undesired operation.*

Important: *This product has demonstrated EMC compliance under conditions that included the use of compliant peripheral devices and shielded cables between system components. It is important that you use compliant peripheral devices and shielded cables between system components to reduce the possibility of causing interference to radios, televisions, and other electronic devices.*

EU Compliance Statement: *Apple Inc. hereby declares that this wireless device is in compliance with the essential requirements and other relevant provisions of the R&TTE Directive.*

A copy of the EU Declaration of Conformity is available online at www.apple.com/euro/compliance.

Apple's EU representative is Apple Distribution International, Hollyhill Industrial Estate, Cork, Ireland.

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That would put Apple halfway toward its goal of obtaining all its non-recycled paper products from sustainable timber. Apple wouldn't say how much paper it uses, but it says two-thirds of its paper packaging comes from recycled material. In the last three months of 2014, Apple sold more than 100 million iPhones and other gadgets, most in cardboard boxes.

AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON PREMIERES

Marvel fans get excited about Ultron



THE LATEST ADDITION TO THE MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE

That aren't many people who don't love a good superhero film, and if there's one such film that can't be ignored by anyone seeking a heady dose of world-saving capers this spring, it's Avengers: Age of Ultron. The iconic team of superheroes that first appeared in 1963 is still going strong, and Earth's Mightiest Heroes have quite the assignment on their hands for this latest big screen epic, which will be released on North American shores on May 1.

The fact that, at the time of typing, the film has already premiered in Los Angeles on April 13, means that we already know a lot about it - and of course, we'll try not to include any big spoilers here. Nonetheless, fans of all things Marvel have much to look forward to on the evidence of the cast and crew alone, Joss Whedon writing and directing and the ensemble cast boasting such talents as Robert Downey Jr., Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Evans and Scarlett Johansson.

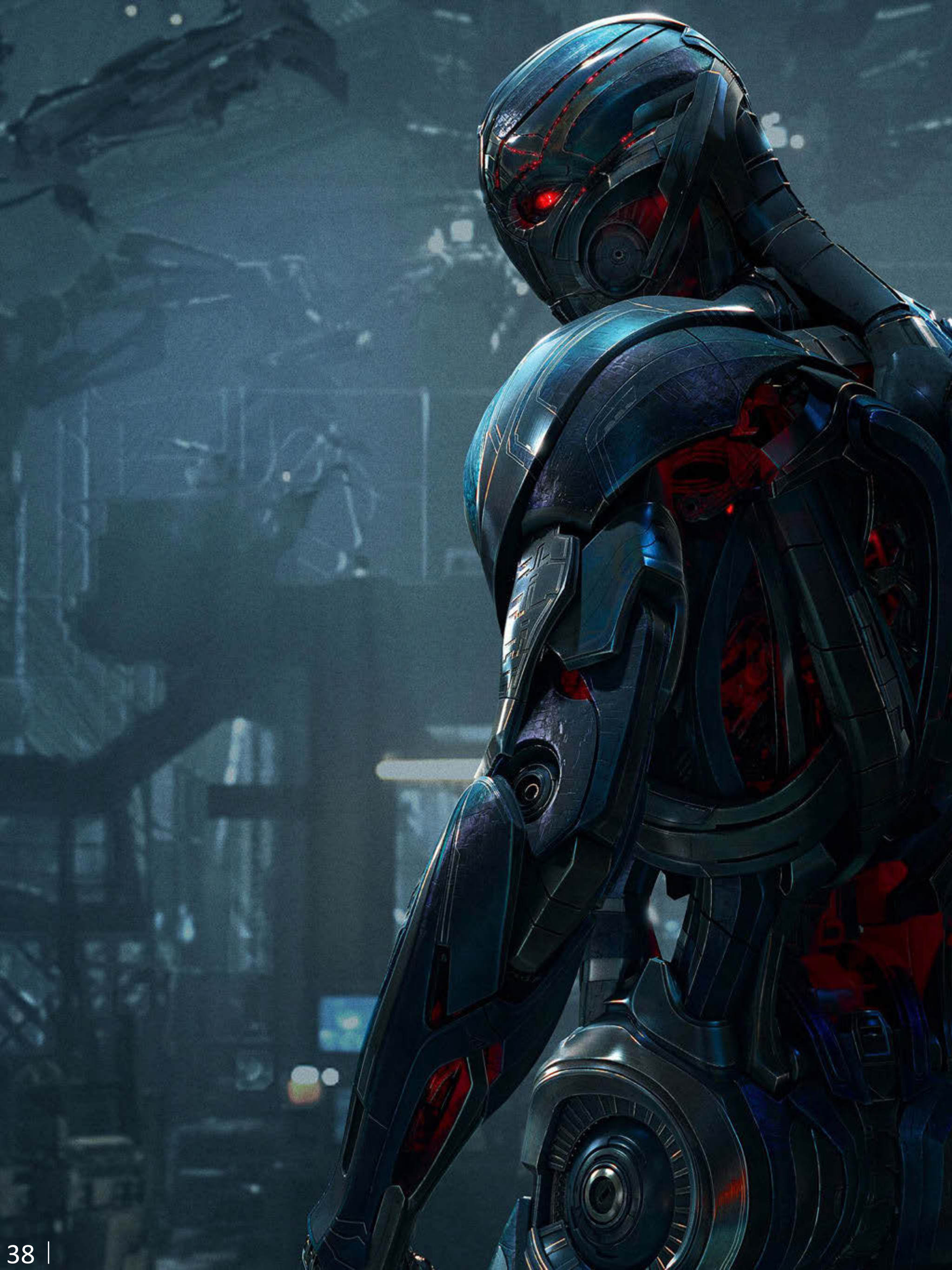
The follow-up to 2012's Marvel's The Avengers, Avengers: Age of Ultron centers on the superhero team's fight against Ultron, a technological enemy that is determined to render the human race extinct. It's Downey's character, Tony Stark, who creates Ultron in an attempt to jumpstart a dormant peacekeeping program, **only for the self-aware robot to decide that it is humanity itself that is principally to blame for the lack of harmony on Earth**.

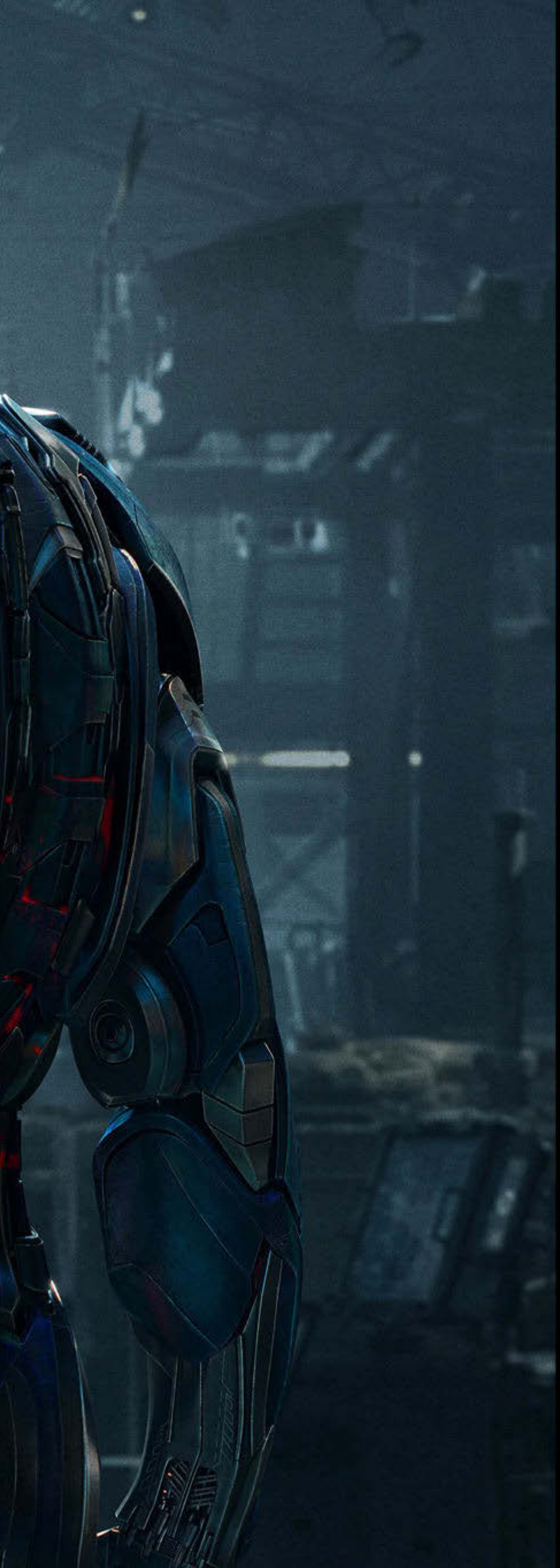












MORE 'TORTURED' THAN 'EVIL'

So far, so traditional superhero movie. Ultron's rapidly-devised plan to eradicate the global human population forces the Avengers to assemble once more to stop him. Iron Man (Downey), Captain America (Evans), Thor (Hemsworth), The Incredible Hulk (Ruffalo), Black Widow (Johansson) and Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner) all feature, with - in the words of Marvel itself - "uneasy alliances and unexpected action" helping to keep things spicy beyond the simple-enough premise.

A signal of the kind of depth that Whedon has aimed for with Age of Ultron is the fact that he has described the titular character as not so much "evil", but tortured. In an interview with Vulture, the director commented: **"Ultron's pain is very, very real to me. He can't control the way his pain makes him behave. And I can relate to that."**

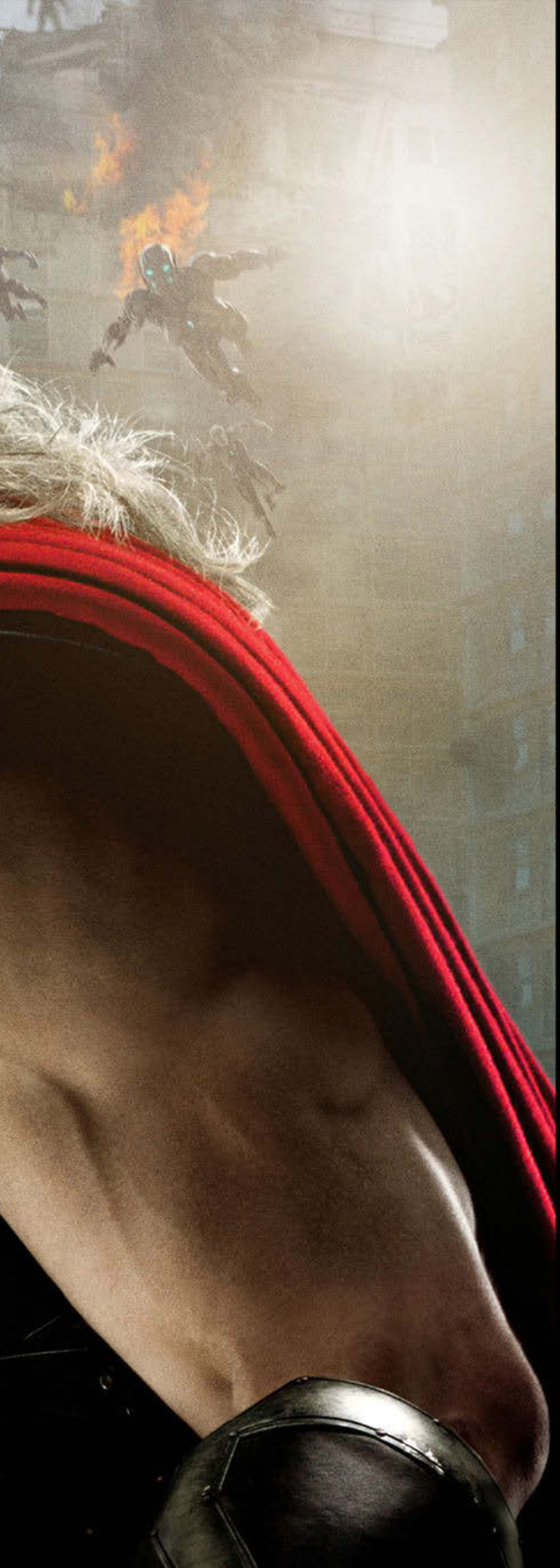
Indeed, Whedon has admitted that the whole film is "so badly, nakedly me", telling Entertainment Weekly that "To do something that is as personal as this movie is - on that budget, for a studio that needs a summer tentpole - is an extraordinary privilege."

There's no doubting that Ultron - portrayed by James Spader - is a formidable Artificial Intelligence program. Possessing an eight-foot tall advanced robotic body and the ability to learn inhumanly quickly, downloading data directly to his mind, he declares that "I was designed to save the world", but soon attributes the most undesirable qualities to the human race.









Of the latter, he concludes: "**How could you be worthy? You're all killers. You want to protect the world, but you don't want it to change.** There's only one path to peace: your extinction."

THE MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE'S LATEST INSTALLMENT

Of course, Age of Ultron isn't just a standalone film - it's part of an infinitely wider fictional world known as the Marvel Universe, which brings together all manner of familiar (and less familiar) Marvel characters - the best-known being Spider-Man, the X-Men, the Fantastic Four and the Avengers.

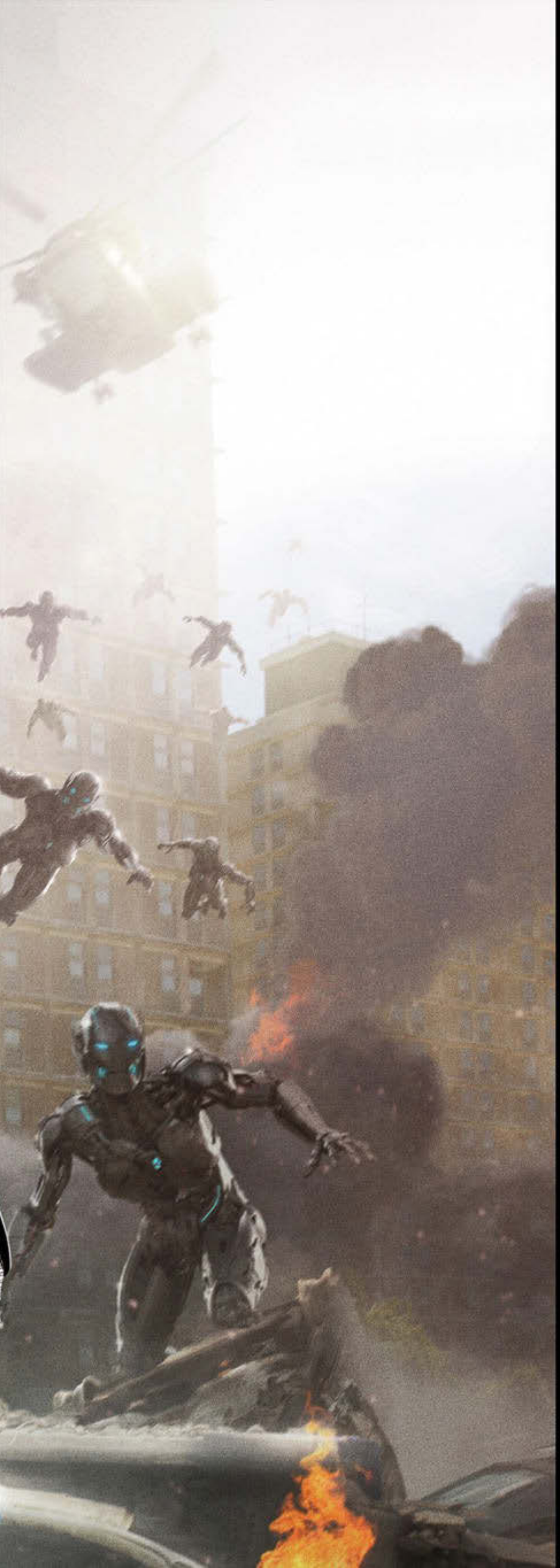
The Avengers themselves were created by writer-editor Stan Lee and artist/co-plotter Jack Kirby. They initially consisted of Iron Man, Ant-Man, the Wasp, Thor and the Hulk, and it's fair to say that the revolving roster has only added to the interest and appeal. Humans, robots, mutants, aliens, supernatural beings and even one-time villains have all been members of the Avengers over the last few decades, responding to a battle cry of "Avengers assemble!" and combating the enemies that would be too overwhelming a challenge for one superhero.

The broader Marvel Universe of which the Avengers are a part has generated various comic books, role playing games, animated television series and other media. The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is the term used for the superhero films that are



based on the characters and independently produced by Marvel Studios.

The intersecting common plot elements, settings and casts have only added to the fascination around the MCU, which began with the release of Iron Man in 2008 and has continued with the likes of The Incredible Hulk (2008), Thor (2011) and Guardians of the Galaxy (2014) - an Ant-Man movie also set for release in July.



A BIGGER ROLE FOR SCARLETT JOHANSSON'S BLACK WIDOW

It seems that everywhere the viewer looks, there will be something to entice and stimulate them in Age of Ultron. That is certainly the case as far as the film's galaxy of characters is concerned, also encompassing such less prominent players as Vision and J.A.R.V.I.S. - played by Paul Bettany - and Maria Hill, the former high-ranking S.H.I.E.L.D. agent now in the employ of Stark. She is played by Cobie Smulders.

But what about Scarlett Johansson? Many of the critical reviews to have already emerged have focused on her expanded part as Natasha Romanoff and Black Widow. Johansson herself has explained that in the new movie, "we definitely learn more about Widow's backstory, and we get to find out how she became the person you see. **All of these characters have deep, dark pasts, and I think that the past catches up to some of us a little bit**."

It's obvious that Black Widow doesn't simply have the role in this movie of romancing Hulk - she actually enjoys a lot of the screen time, which has triggered further speculation about a dedicated Black Widow movie in the future. Although Whedon has said that he won't direct another Avengers movie after Age of Ultron, he has said to MTV that if he could direct one solo-led Marvel movie, Widow would be his choice.

With Johansson also suggesting that she would be "up for" such a film if Whedon was





in the director's chair, we suspect that the possibility won't be too far away from the minds of Marvel executives.

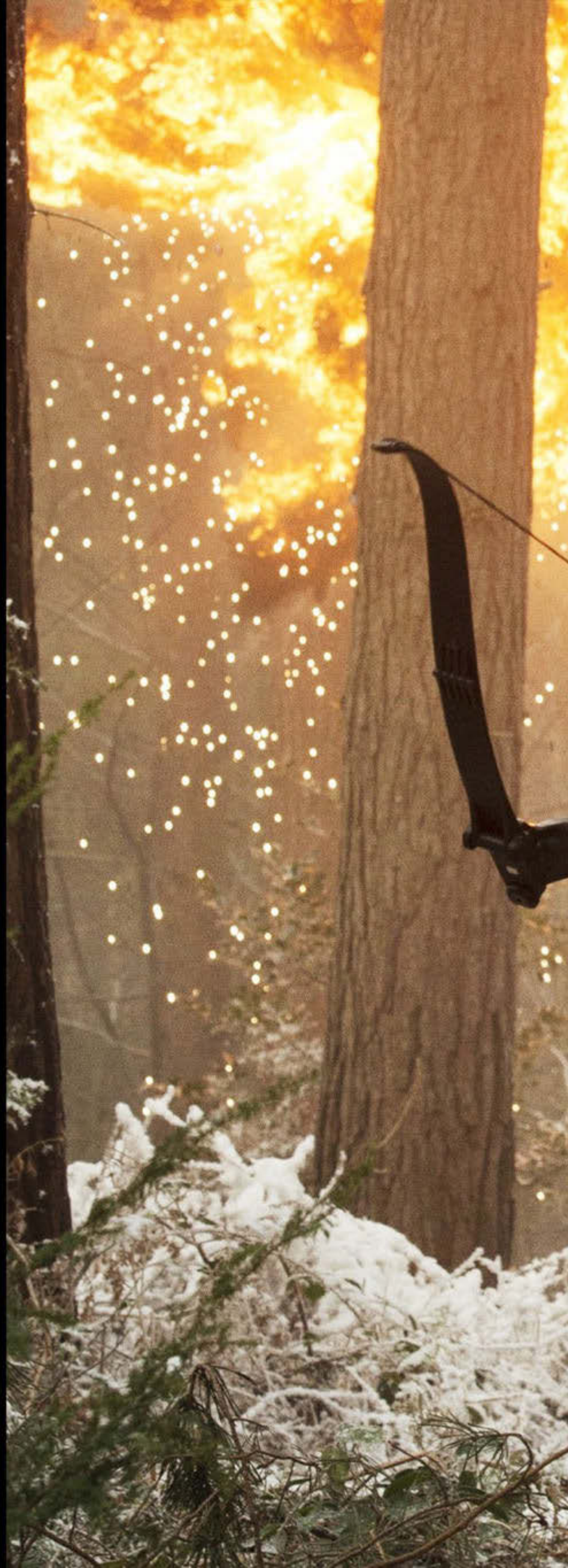
RESPONDING TO AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS

When the Superman reboot Man of Steel was released in 2013, it sparked a fair few controversies, not least of which was the sheer destruction wrought upon Metropolis in the final battle between Superman and Zod. The adversaries were shown slamming each other into falling buildings as part of the city ended up being leveled. Many fans objected to this, on the basis that it would have surely meant a 9/11-esque toll of off-screen victims.

Avengers: Age of Ultron, though, clearly takes a different approach, with the heroes frequently portrayed evacuating and saving innocent people. This evidently isn't a superhero movie that is prepared to accept the average man or woman as collateral damage in a brawl with the enemy, which is actually an interesting way to add to the challenge faced by the protagonists in their pursuit of Ultron.

What cannot be doubted is that this was a deliberate decision, Whedon admitting that he had discussed with Kevin Feige - the head of Marvel Studios - "that we'd seen a little bit of a trend in movies where the city gets destroyed and the heroes say, 'We won!' And I'm thinking, Define 'win'."

The director said that with Ultron, he wished to "get back to what's important, which is that













the people you're trying to protect are people. **We knew that we wanted to play with a lot of big, fun destruction**, but at the same time, we wanted to say, 'There's a price for this.'"

ONE SERIOUSLY MUST-SEE SUPERHERO MOVIE

With the reviews that have already been coming in for Avengers: Age of Ultron on the basis of the premiere - including critics' more informal responses on social media - pointing to a serious critical hit, it looks like we can expect the film to fare similarly impressively at the box office.

Even if you aren't a diehard follower of the world of Marvel, if you like the idea of a superhero film that is simple on the surface while also delivering impressive sophistication and depth, we would seriously recommend that you catch it at your local theater in early May. ■

by Benjamin Kerry & Gavin Lenaghan









RINGO STARR, GREEM DAY ROCK THEIR WAY INTO ROCK HALL

Ringo Starr was ushered into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with a little help from one of his famous friends.

The mop-topped drummer who kept the beat for the Beatles, Starr was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a solo artist on Saturday night during a ceremony jammed with scintillating performances and touching moments.

Starr was the last of the Beatles to be inducted for his individual work, getting in after bandmates Paul McCartney, John Lennon and George Harrison. He was always the fourth Beatle - John, Paul, George ... and Ringo - but now he’s been immortalized as a frontman.





Starr was inducted along with Green Day, underground-icon Lou Reed, Joan Jett and The Blackhearts, soul singer-songwriter Bill Withers, guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble, The Paul Butterfield Blues Band and The “5” Royales.

The 74-year-old Starr was inducted by McCartney, who said he could always count on Starr to have his back on every song.

“You don’t have to look with Ringo,” McCartney said. “He’s there.”

Starr, amazingly fit and looking 20 years younger than his age, then stepped to the podium and said: “My name is Ringo and I play drums” - as if anyone didn’t know.

He was then joined on stage by Eagles guitarist Joe Walsh on “It Don’t Come Easy” before McCartney came out to play bass, the two living Beatles jamming again, to “A Little Help From My Friends.”

The evening concluded, as it always does, with an all-star jam, this time to “I Wanna Be Your Man.”

With plenty of punk attitude and energy, Green Day thrashed its way into the Rock Hall.

The Bay Area trio, which formed as teenagers and helped make punk rock radio friendly in the 1990s, briefly turned the star-studded event into one of their high-intensity shows with a powerful set of some of their most memorable hits.

From the opening power chords of “American Idiot,” Billie Joe Armstrong, Mike Dirnt and Tre Cool had the crowd at Cleveland’s Public Hall bouncing and dancing in the aisles.

Brash and belligerent, Green Day blasted onto the music scene just as Seattle’s grunge sound was growing stale. The band borrowed riffs from punk pioneers like The Stooges and Sex Pistols, flavored them with some power chords and pop hooks and helped redefine a genre.


PEACE



Reed was both daring and provocative as a songwriter and lyricist, pushing boundaries with ballads about forbidden subjects like drugs, prostitution and suicide. Reed's songs like "Walk On The Wild Side," "Vicious" and "Heroin" remain vibrant today. Although he died in 2013, Reed continues to influence a young generation of musicians touched by his rebel ways.

Patti Smith remembered Reed the poet and recalled being at Rockaway Beach when she got the news of his death. She rode the subway back to New York City, Reed's city.

"People were crying on the street," Smith said. "You could hear his voice coming out of cafes. Everyone was playing his music. ... Thank you, Lou, for brutally and benevolently injecting poetry into your music."

Withers was inexplicably left off the hall's ballot for years, perhaps an unfortunate oversight. But the 76-year-old, who walked away from the music industry in the 1980s, is now part of musical royalty with a catalog of timeless songs like "Lean On Me" and "Just The Two Of Us." Stevie Wonder said he would often hear Withers' music and say, "I wish I could have written that song."

Withers was humbled Wonder would be the one to induct him.

"It's like a lion opening the door for a kitty cat," he said.

Wonder performed "Ain't No Sunshine" with Withers sitting next to him on stage enjoying every second. Withers, who has rarely performed in public over the past three decades, then helped sing the "Lean On Me" chorus with John Legend.

Jett couldn't keep her rough rocker edge for long. After being introduced, Jett, the black-leathered girl you might not bring home to meet your mom, was moved to tears.





“I tried not to cry and be tough,” she said, her black mascara starting to run.

Jett opened the show with a rip-roaring version of “Bad Reputation” and was joined by Foo Fighters frontman and former Nirvana drummer Dave Grohl for a blistering “Cherry Bomb,” one of her hits with The Runaways, a band that broke down barriers for women in rock.

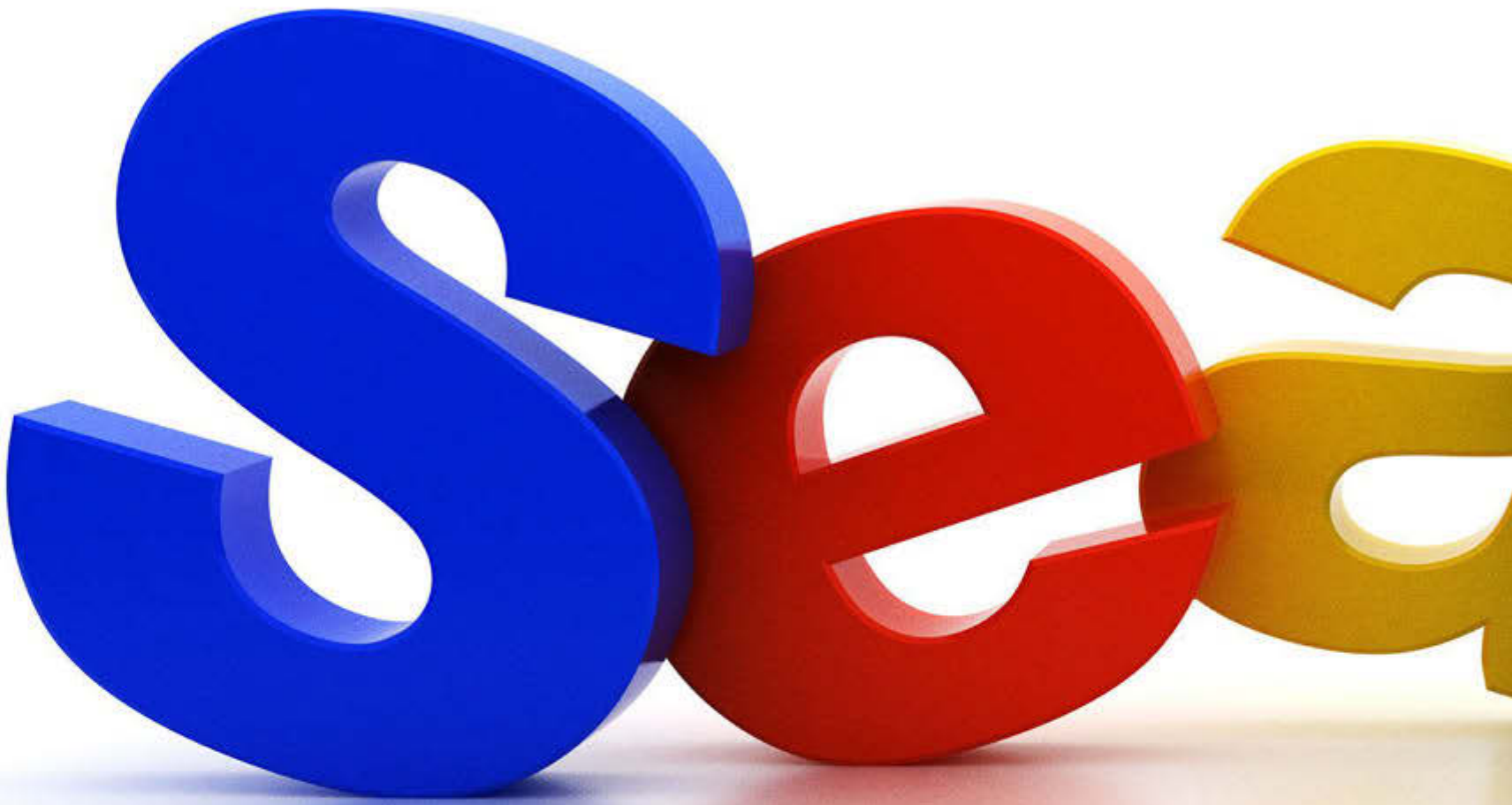
Sadly, Vaughan died in 1990 at the height of his blossoming career in a helicopter crash. Armed with his signature Stratocaster, the Texas bluesman was an unstoppable force on six strings.

John Mayer called it the “honor of a lifetime” to induct Vaughan, whom he called “the ultimate guitar hero.”

“Stevie used his guitar to lead him out of town,” said Mayer, who later traded licks on “Texas Flood” with Gary Clark Jr. “He gave me hope because heroes give you hope. While Jimi Hendrix came down from outer space, Stevie came up from below the ground.”

HBO will broadcast the event on May 30.

GOOGLE SHAKING UP SEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS ON SMARTPHONES





Google is about to change the way its influential search engine recommends websites on smartphones in a shift that's expected to sway where millions of people shop, eat and find information.

The revised formula, scheduled to be released Tuesday, will favor websites that Google defines as "mobile-friendly." Websites that don't fit the description will be demoted in Google's search results on smartphones while those meeting the criteria will be more likely to appear at the top of the rankings - a prized position that can translate into more visitors and money.

Although Google's new formula won't affect searches on desktop and laptop computers, it will have a huge influence on how and where people spend their money, given that more people are relying on their smartphones to compare products in stores and look for restaurants. That's why Google's new rating system is being billed by some search experts as "Mobile-geddon."

"Some sites are going to be in for a big surprise when they find a drastic change in the amount of people visiting them from mobile devices," said Itai Sadan, CEO of website-building service Duda.

It’s probably the most significant change that Google Inc. has ever made to its mobile search rankings, according to Matt McGee, editor-in-chief for Search Engine Land, a trade publication that follows every tweak that the company makes to its closely guarded algorithms.

Here are a few things to know about what’s happening and why Google is doing it.

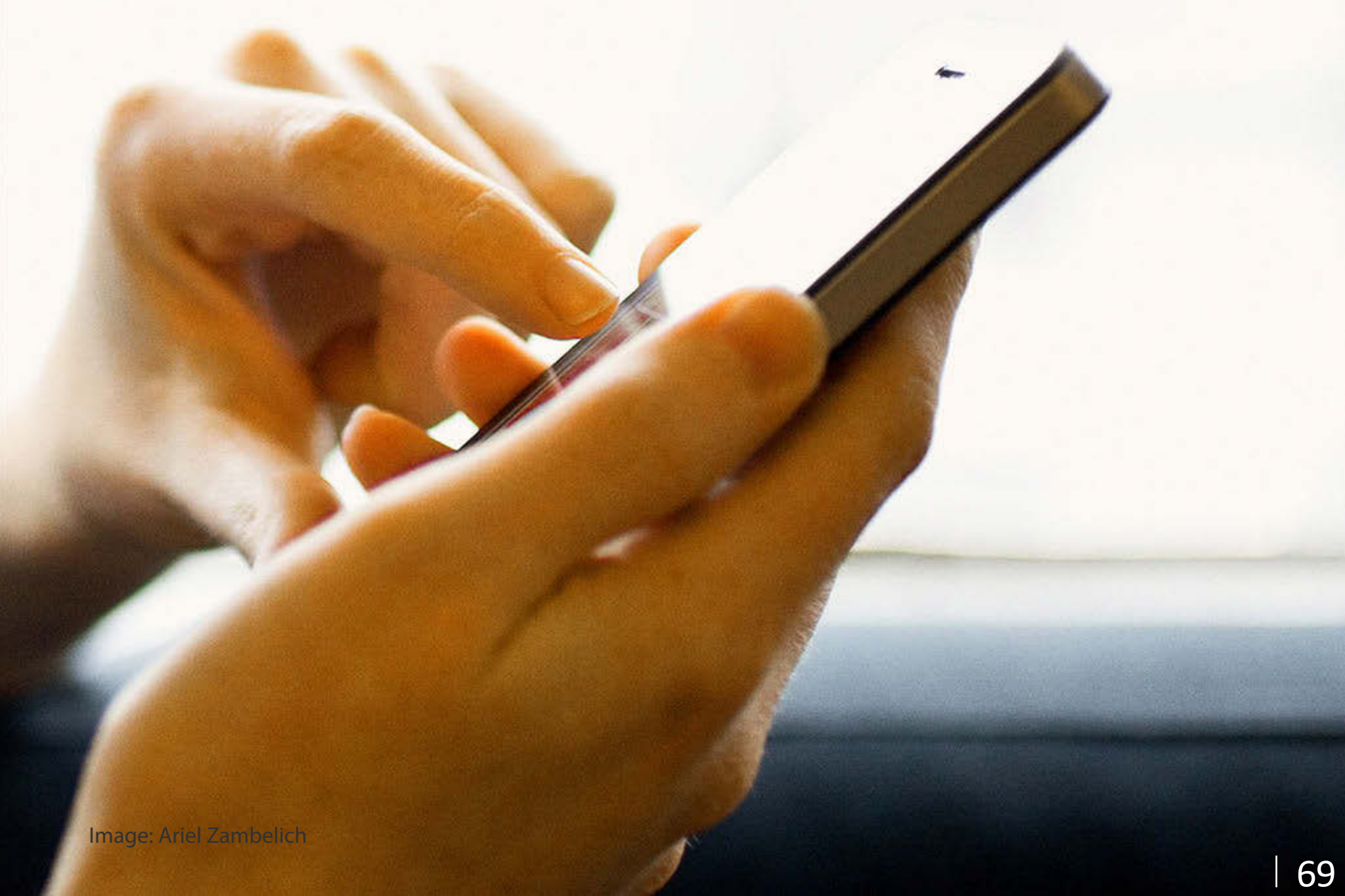


Image: Ariel Zambelich

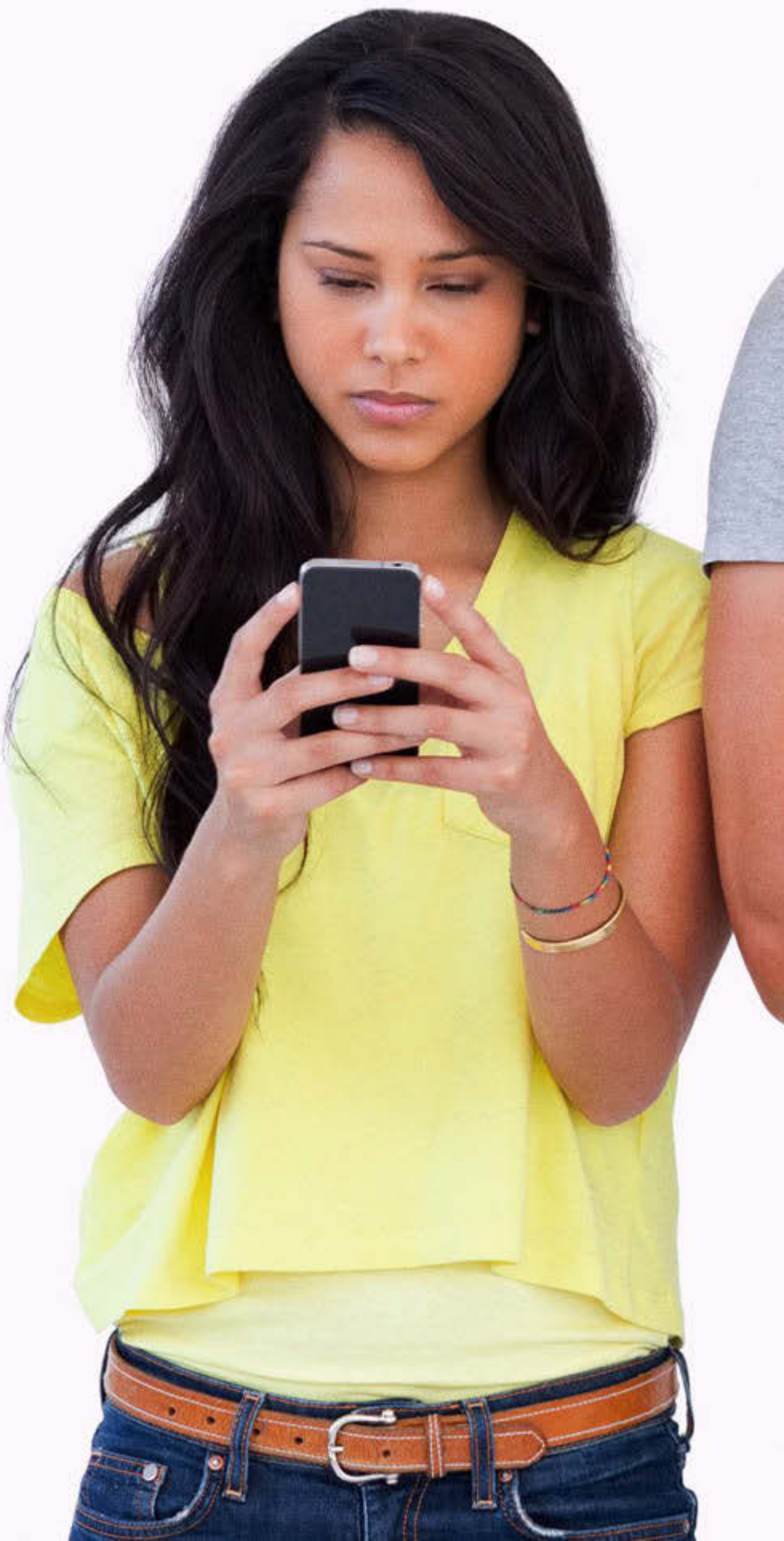
MAKING MOBILE FRIENDS

To stay in Google's good graces, websites must be designed so they load quickly on mobile devices. Content must also be easily accessible by scrolling up and down - without having to also swipe to the left or right. It also helps if all buttons for making purchases or taking other actions on the website can be easily seen and touched on smaller screens.

If a website has been designed only with PC users in mind, the graphics take longer to load on smartphones and the columns of text don't all fit on the smaller screens, to the aggravation of someone trying to read it.

Google has been urging websites to cater to mobile device for years, mainly because that is where people are increasingly searching for information.

The number of mobile searches in the U.S. is rising by about 5 percent while inquiries on PCs are dipping slightly, according to research firm comScore Inc. In the final three months of last year, 29 percent of all U.S. search requests - about 18.5 billion - were made on mobile devices, comScore estimated. Google processes the bulk of searches - two-thirds in the U.S. and even more in many other countries.



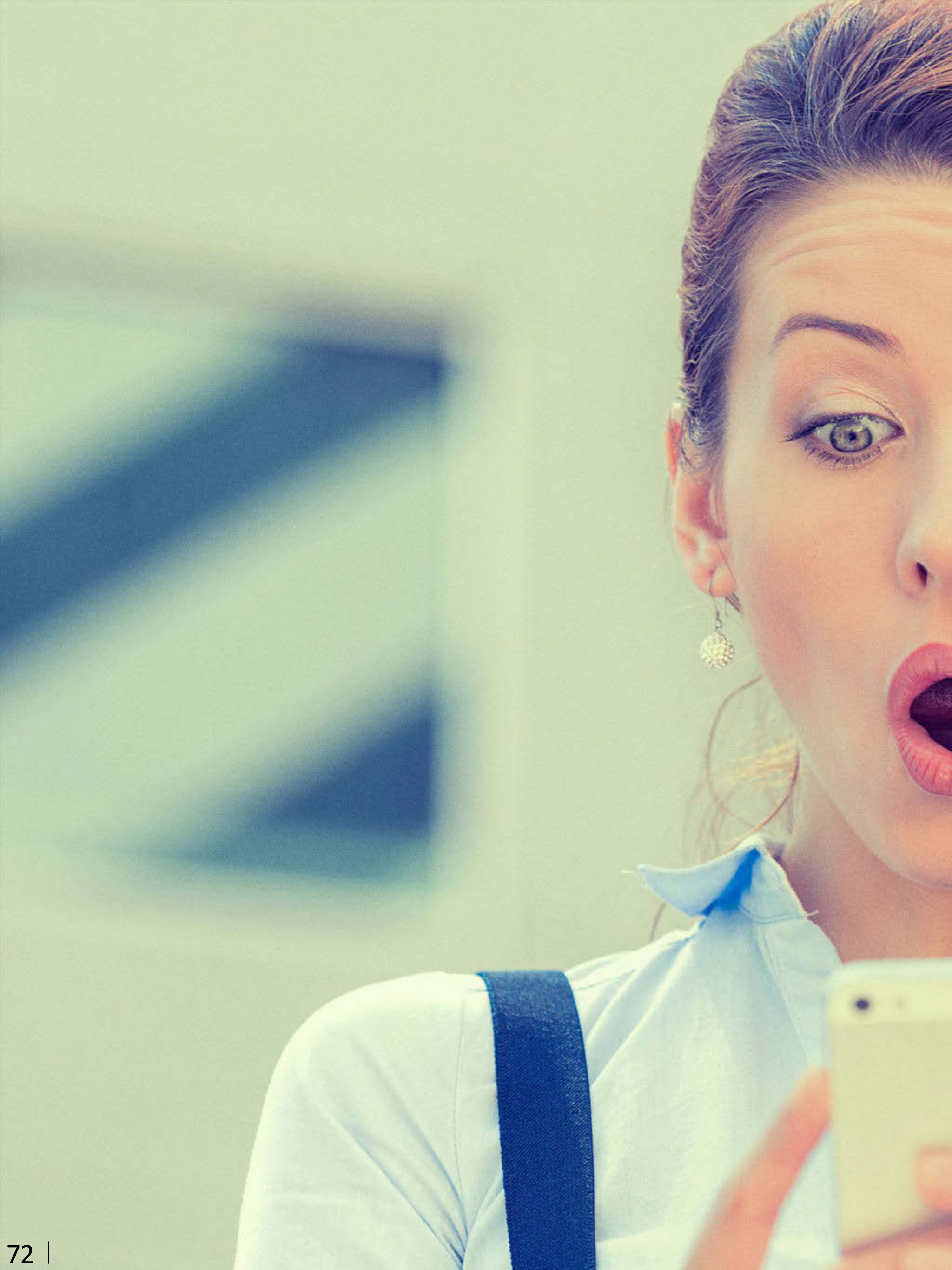
BRACING FOR CHANGE

To minimize complaints, the company disclosed its plans nearly two months ago. It also created a step-by-step guide (**http://bit.ly/1GyC0Id**) and a tool to test compliance with the new standards (**http://bit.ly/1EVi9R3**).

Google has faced uproar over past changes to its search formula. Two of the bigger revisions, done in 2011 and 2012, focused on an attempt to weed out misleading websites and other digital rubbish. Although that goal sounds reasonable, many websites still complained that Google's changes unfairly demoted them in the rankings, making their content more difficult to find.

STILL CAUGHT OFF GUARD

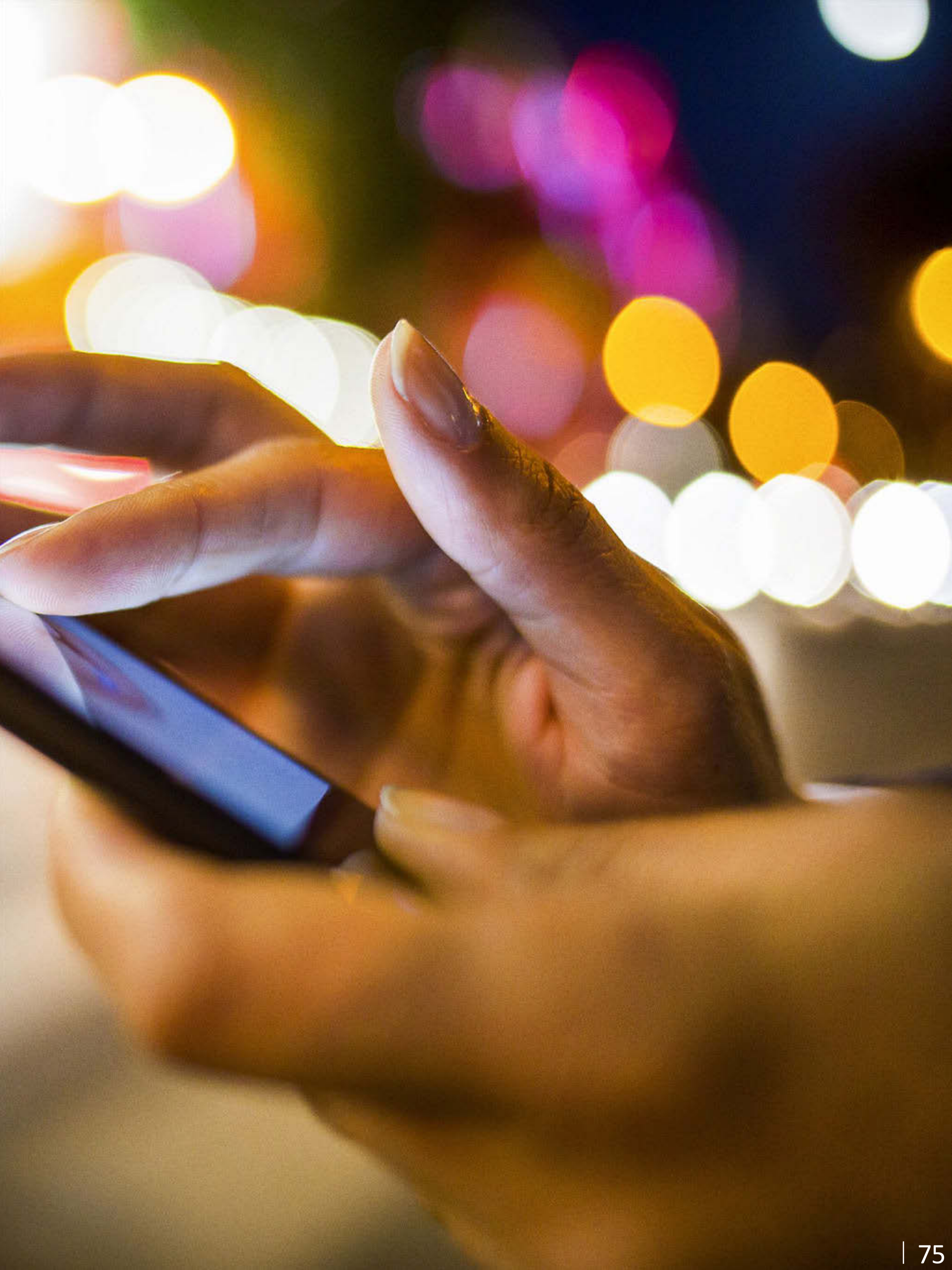






While most major merchants and big companies already have websites likely to meet Google's mobile standard, the new formula threatens to hurt millions of small businesses that haven't had the money or incentive to adapt their sites for smartphones.

"A lot of small sites haven't really had a reason to be mobile friendly until now, and it's not going to be easy for them to make the changes," McGee said.



BURYING HELPFUL CONTENT

Google's search formula weighs a variety of factors to determine the rankings of its results. One of the most important considerations has always been whether a site contains the most pertinent information sought by a search request.

But new pecking order in Google's mobile search may relegate some sites to the back pages of the search results, even if their content is more relevant to a search request than other sites that happen to be easier to access on smartphones.

That will be an unfortunate consequence, but also justifiable because a person might not even bother to look at sites that take a long time to open or difficult to read on mobile devices, Gartner analyst Whit Andrews said.

"Availability is part of relevancy," Andrews said. "A lot of people aren't going to think something is relevant if they can't get it to appear on their iPhone."







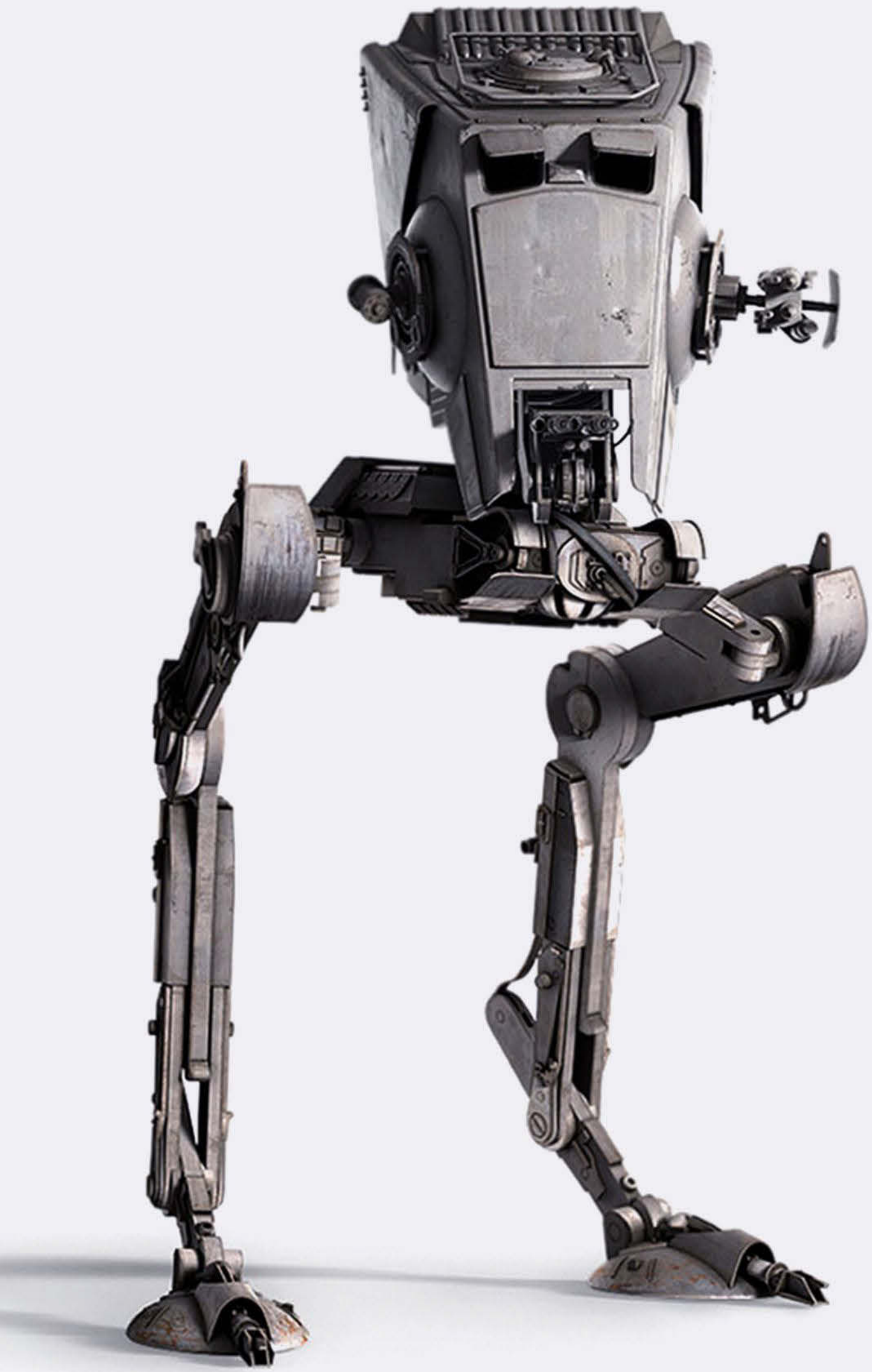


'STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT' UNLEASHED AT FAN CONVENTION

The Force isn't merely awakening on the big screen. It's also returning to the video game realm.

"Star Wars: Battlefront" publisher Electronic Arts and Swedish developer DICE showcased their next-generation rendition of the "Star Wars" multiplayer shooter Friday at Star Wars Celebration, the annual fan extravaganza celebrating the sci-fi franchise.

The new iteration of "Battlefront" takes place amid the conflicts of the original film trilogy and is scheduled for release Nov. 17 for PlayStation 4, Xbox One and PCs.





"Battlefront" will focus on frenzied shoot-outs between up to 40 players portraying Rebel Alliance and Galactic Empire forces. In a demonstration of the game's multiplayer mode, a team of jetpack-equipped rebels were shown carving their way through the woodsy Endor while Stormtroopers charged at them on foot, on speeders and within walkers, including a hulking AT-AT war machine.

Other locales teased in game footage included the snowy Hoth, sandy Tatooine and gooey Sullust, a lava-spewing planet referenced in 1983's "Return of the Jedi," as well as many "Star Wars" games and novels, but rarely ever seen. "Battlefront" won't solely be centered on expendable ground troops. The game will reward sharpshooters with the ability to embody such iconic characters as bounty hunter Boba Fett and Sith baddie Darth Vader on the battlefield.

"You can storm in as the Dark Lord himself," said "Battlefront" design director Niklas Fegraeus. "You can wield a lightsaber. You can Force choke the rebel scum, which is fun. Basically, you are the boss of the battle. This means that you, as Vader, can lead your team to victory - if you play well."

The action will also take to the skies with players engaging in dogfights with TIE Fighters, X-wings and the Millennium Falcon, though the developers were coy about how battles would alternate between ground and air combat.









“We wanted it to feel authentic to this universe,” said “Battlefront” executive producer Patrick Bach. “You can get into these vehicles, from speeder bikes to X-wings, TIE fighters, AT-STs, AT-ATs. There’s a wide range of vehicles that we wanted to realize. The difficulty with a game is that they need to be balanced with the troops on the ground.”

“Battlefront” will also include a free downloadable level available two weeks before “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” opens in theaters Dec. 18. It’s set on Jakku, the battle-scarred desert planet glimpsed in “Force Awakens” teasers. The expansion, dubbed “Battle of Jakku,” will explore the moment following “Return of the Jedi” when the New Republic confronted Imperial holdouts on the previously unseen Outer Rim enclave.

“You never get to see it in the new movie, so it was this brilliant opportunity to recreate the Battle of Jakku, which you only see the remnants of in the movie,” said Bach. “In the game, you actually get to play the Battle of Jakku. It’s the same place from the new movie but 30 years earlier.”

The original “Battlefront” was released in 2005 by publisher LucasArts and developer Pandemic Studios. It dispensed with traditional “Star Wars” storytelling in favor of shoot-’em-up action.

The forthcoming “Battlefront,” which was first teased at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in 2013, marks the first title in a 10-year deal between the Walt Disney Co. and Electronic Arts Inc. to create new “Star Wars” games.

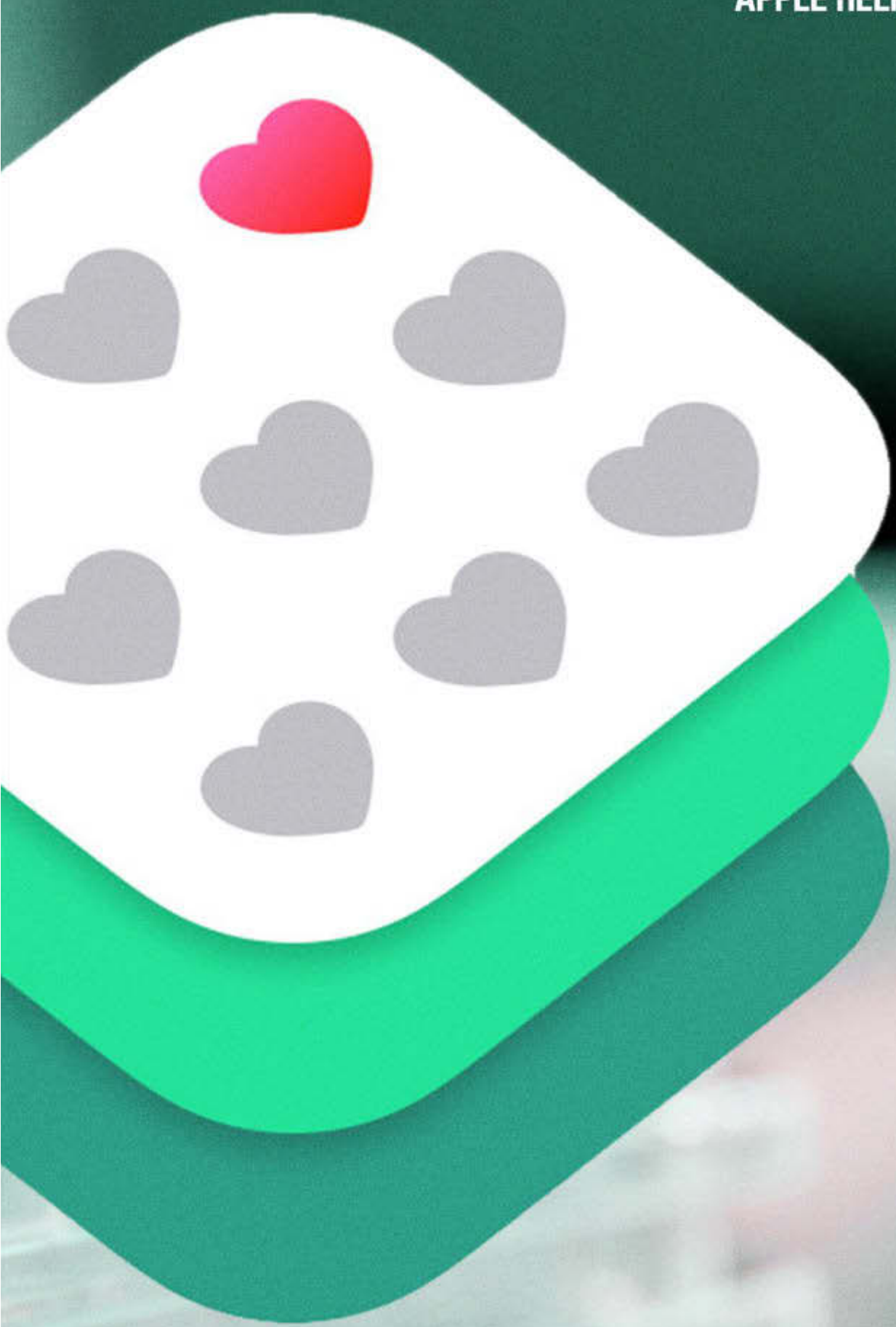
“We didn’t want this to be a normal licensing relationship,” said LucasArts digital business vice president Ada Duan at Celebration. “We didn’t want them to just make movie games. We wanted a deep partnership to create brand-new experiences.”

Online: **http://starwars.ea.com/battlefront**

RESEARCHKIT

ALREADY REVOLUTIONIZING MEDICAL STUDIES

APPLE HELPING TO MAKE US HEALTHIER




9:41 AM
Cancel
Step 3 of 4
Use 2 fingers to alternately tap as fast as you can for 20 seconds.
Total Taps
101
Tap
Tap
iBooks
mPower
Safari
Music
Game Center
18

HELPING TO TACKLE PUBLIC AND PERSONAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Few of us would argue that medical studies aren't important - indeed, for many of you reading this, they may be the reason why you are still alive now. This has not prevented difficulties with conducting such research, however, **with both inconsistent data collection and small sample sizes having long proved a hindrance**. Well, now, one of Apple's latest developments - ResearchKit - may be helping to change that.

At the latest major Apple keynote in March, **there may have been a lot to get excited about as far as new products from the Cupertino stable were concerned**, with a new MacBook being unveiled at the same time as more information was shared about the Apple Watch. However, as so often with events like these, it is so often the less glamorous developments that can actually have the most significance.



Yes, that was when ResearchKit was announced. This isn't a shiny iDevice, but a software platform, but it is nonetheless already making a big difference to the world of medical research, simply by drawing upon the wealth of health-related data from iDevice users. This open source platform enables the creation of iPhone apps that enlist users - with their permission, of course - onto medical studies, while they simply go about their daily lives.




9:41 AM
100%
Done
Step 9 of 9
Heart Age Results
Comparison of your actual age and your heart age.
62
Your Age
60
Your Heart Age
10-Year Risk Estimate
According to your answers, your calculated risk of developing Heart Disease or Stroke within 10 years is:
6%
Calculated Risk
7%
Optimal Risk Factors
Heart Age Summary
10-Year Risk Score: In general a 10-year ri
7.5% is considered high and warrants
discussion with your doctor. There may b
medical or family history that can increas
risk and these should be discussed with
doctor.
Thursday
16
Calendar
Photos
Camera
Videos
Maps
Clock
Game Center
Stocks
Reminders
iBooks
App Store
iTunes Store
Settings
MyHeart
Passbook
Health
Phone
Mail
Safari
Music

HOW RESEARCHKIT WORKS

As you might expect, medical researchers are pretty excited about ResearchKit - indeed, some of them are already putting it to good use. Getting people to sign up for medical studies in the traditional way can be arduous to say the least, but according to Bloomberg, within a day of the launch of ResearchKit last month, thousands of people had volunteered to contribute their data.

A simply staggering 11,000 people put themselves forward for one Stanford University cardiovascular trial alone - the kind of numbers that the institution has said would not normally be achievable without a year-long national effort. All the while, the premise of ResearchKit is simple - Apple takes the data generated by its Health app and shares it with the doctors and scientists who most stand to benefit from it in their studies.



Probably the most obvious benefit of the ResearchKit approach to garnering medical data is that there's so much of it, which even by itself, should surely help to improve the quality of findings. The automatic way in which the information is gathered also seemingly removes the risk of people simply lying about their activity levels.

NOT A HIT WITH EVERYONE

On the negative side, though, a huge number of sign-ups doesn't necessarily always deliver a sufficient number of high quality results - that depends very much on how ideal the candidates are for a given study. There are also still some questions that a doctor may need to ask directly - an app can't be depended on for absolutely everything.

Then, there are the privacy concerns that always arise with a development like this, where such immense amounts of data are changing hands. Apple has been careful to emphasize that it has taken privacy concerns seriously, stating that the choice of which studies to join is down to the user, who is also able to control what information they provide to which apps.

But there have still been some grumbles about the possibility of poorly-constructed apps allowing health data to be grabbed by hackers. **This helps to explain why Apple made ResearchKit open-source**, which means that the public can view the code underpinning the software.

In the words of Adrian Gropper, chief technology officer at the nonprofit group Patient Privacy Rights, "Open source encourages people to report the bugs in the software and get them fixed. The gold standard is open source because security by obscurity has been shown not to work."

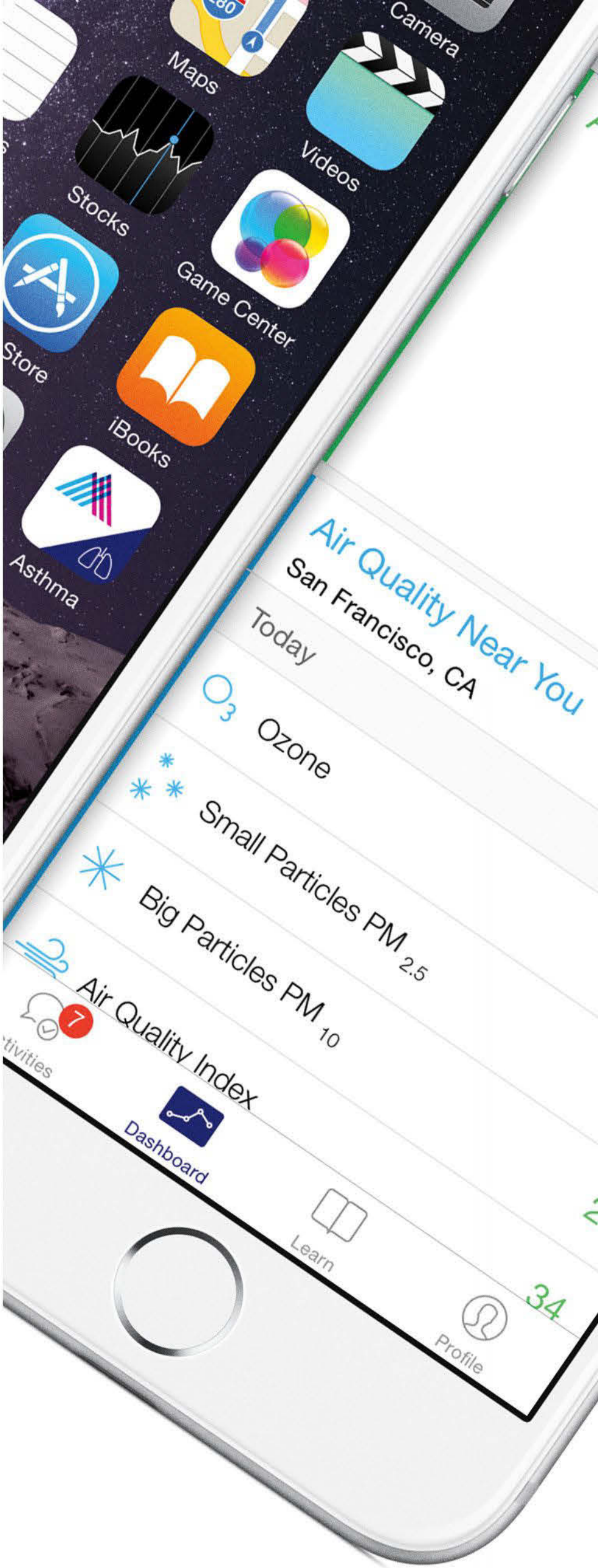
THE EARLY APPLICATIONS OF RESEARCHKIT

Nonetheless, it is difficult to overstate the huge change that ResearchKit represents for the world of medical research, with doctors and scientists able to use data that they know to be real, personal and up-to-date, gained from people across the United States.

Furthermore, if you wanted to see just how big a step forward it represents, you would only need to look to the first apps that have been developed from it, encompassing such areas as diabetes, asthma health, Parkinson's disease, breast cancer and cardiovascular disease.

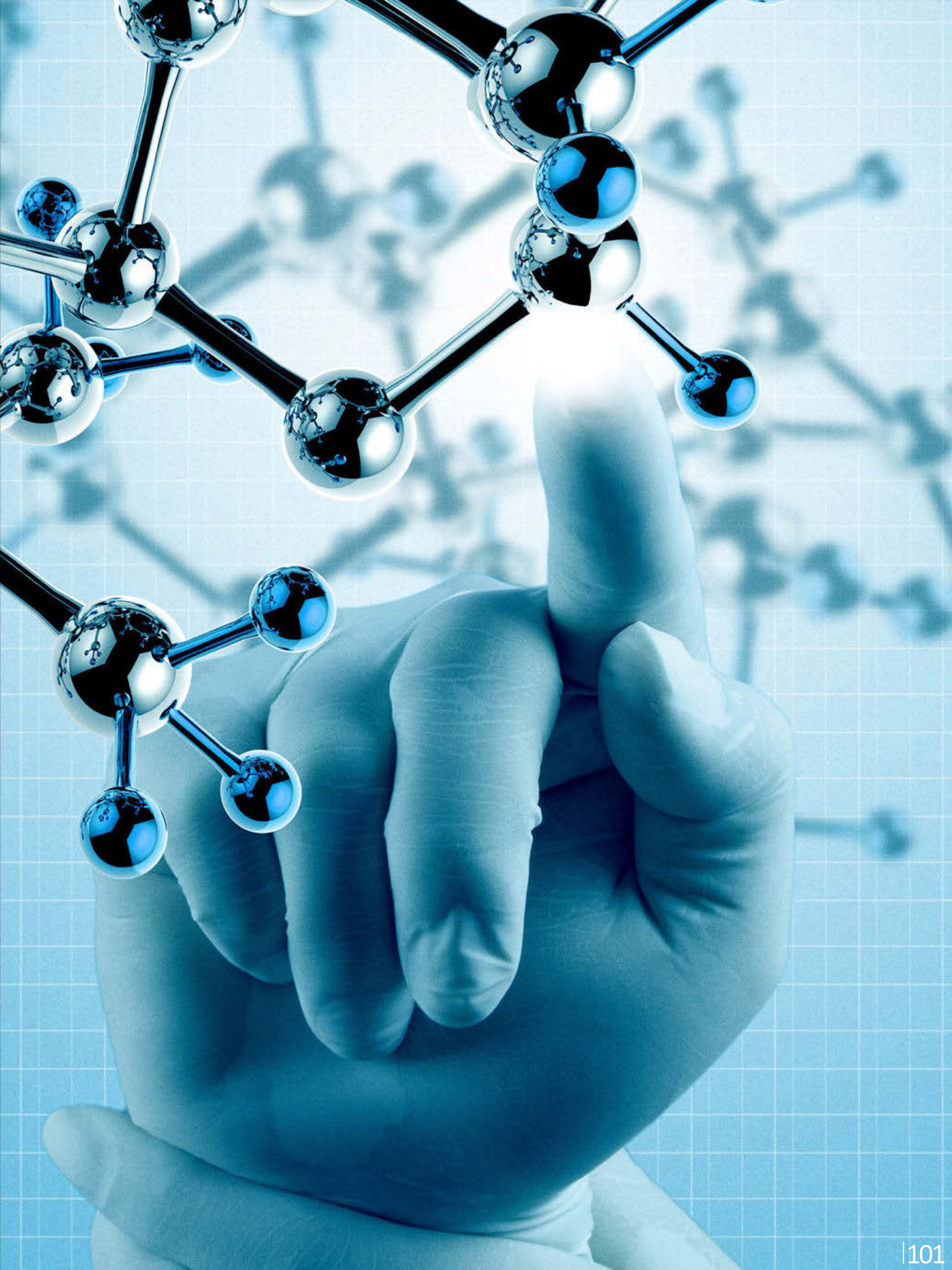
There is the Asthma Help app, for instance, which has been developed by Mount Sinai, Weill Cornell Medical College and LifeMap in order to learn more about the triggers for the disease, sufferers being helped to stay in areas with the best air quality as part of the self-management of their asthma. The tracking of symptom patterns in individuals assists researchers looking for new treatment personalization options.

Another app, mPower, is intended to help researchers to better understand the links




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100%
Dashboard
Edit
Asthma Symptom Control
100%
30
34


MGH
1811



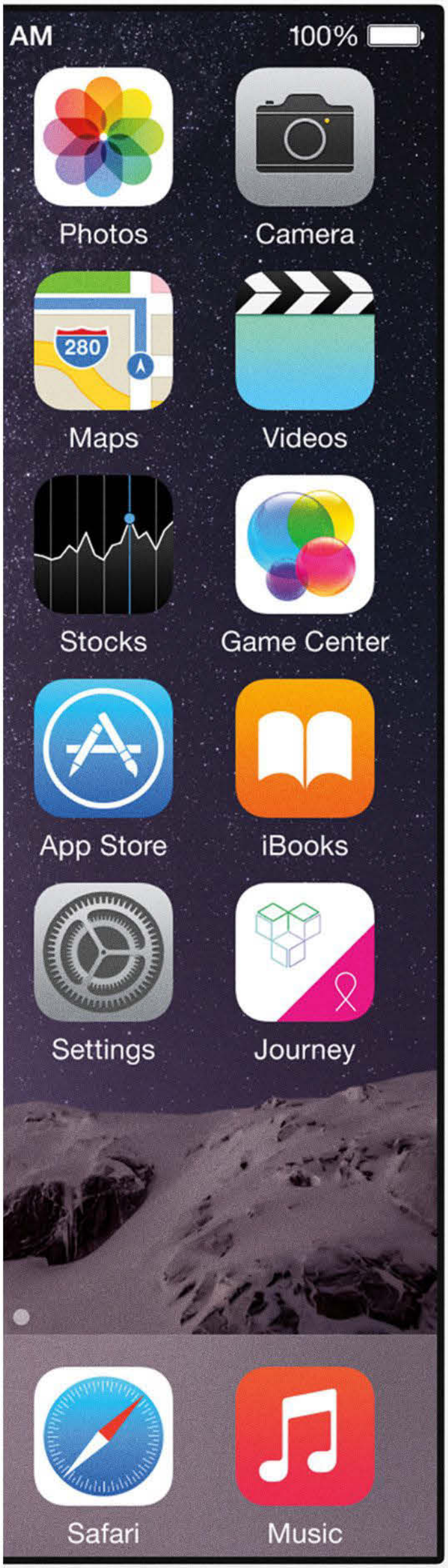
between certain symptoms and Parkinson's disease - a crucial objective, given how the sheer variability of the symptoms associated with this disease have long confused scientists. The work of the University of Rochester and Sage Bionetworks, the mPower app uses the iPhone's gyroscope to measure such parameters as the user's dexterity and gait stability.

IMPLICATIONS FOR BREAST CANCER AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Breast cancer is another disease that may just be made a thing of the past all the sooner with the help of ResearchKit. Apple has cited the example of the Share the Journey app, which was created by the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, Penn Medicine and Sage Bionetworks. It was conceived so that those being treated with chemotherapy for breast cancer could report on its long-term effects.

With the users of the Share the Journey app able to easily provide information on their cognitive abilities, mood and energy levels, it could help to make a big difference in future to the quality of life enjoyed by patients post-treatment.

But it doesn't necessarily need to be those who have already been diagnosed with a certain condition who can participate in the kind of useful studies that ResearchKit makes possible. The MyHeart Counts app, for instance, helps users to maintain the utmost heart health, evaluating their activity and



9:41 AM 100%

Learn

Sage BIONETWORKS

Journey

About this Study

How this Study Works

Who Can Participate

Who is Running this Study

Symptoms

Life After Treatment

Dashboard Learn Profile

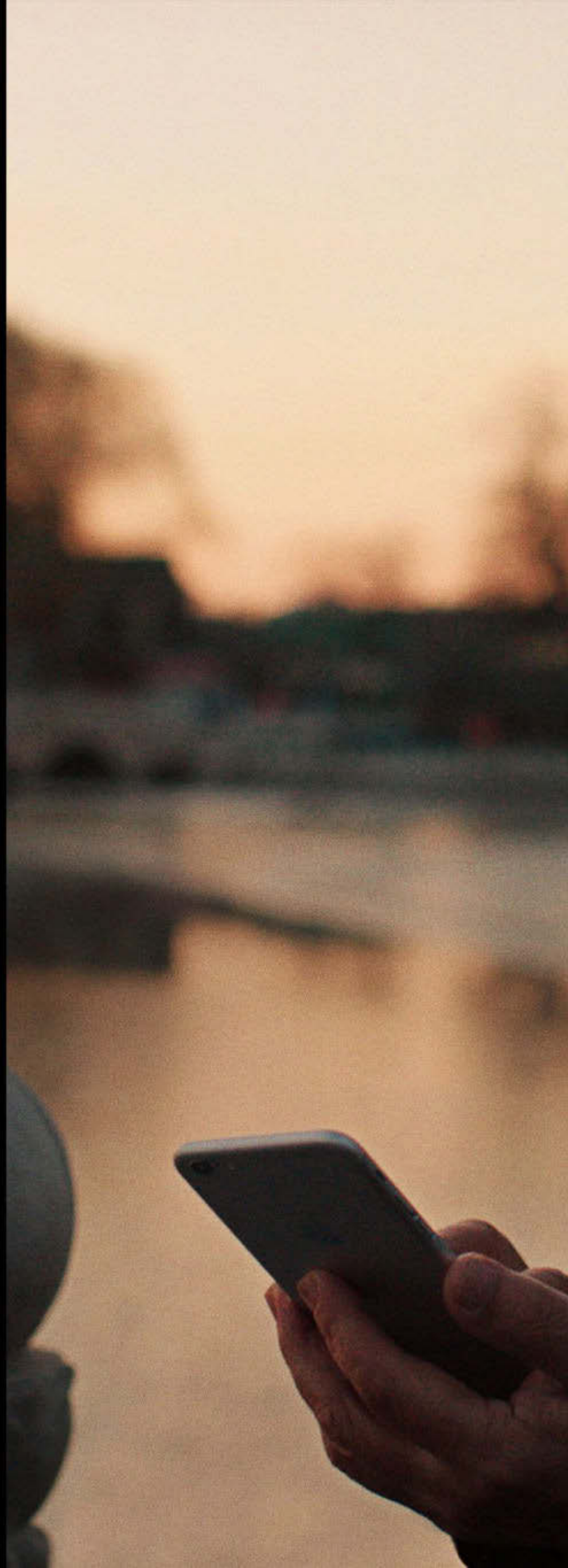
lifestyle and advising on their present risk of cardiovascular disease. It was developed in a collaboration between Stanford Medicine and the University of Oxford.

THEN, THERE'S DIABETES...

It's not a new suggestion that smartphone or wearable technology could be a very good thing in the lives of diabetes sufferers, and ResearchKit is already showing its use in this department. The GlucoSuccess app has been created by Massachusetts General Hospital, with the aim of learning about how a participant's blood glucose levels are affected by their physical activity, diet and medications.

The app was the work of the Center for Assessment Technology and Continuous Health (CATCH), which brings together faculty from the hospital and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As CATCH co-founder and co-director Dr. Stanley Shaw has observed, "As the research progresses, you really get an unprecedented database of fine grain health behaviors in the context of blood glucose measurements for large groups of people."

It's hard to deny the massive improvement that this represents on previous research methods. The traditional custom has been for diabetes patients to attend the center once every three or four years and complete a questionnaire, but with ResearchKit, scientists are able to accumulate substantial amounts of data on a daily basis.





Such frequent data collection should lend itself to accuracy, and given the ability for feedback to be given throughout the study, it also ought to be a more engaging experience for participants.

RESEARCHKIT: TRULY REVAMPING MEDICAL RESEARCH

For every one of the aforementioned conditions, ResearchKit is making a massive positive impact right now - so one can only imagine how profoundly some of the most critical medical research will be revolutionized once adoption reaches its peak. The software is perhaps another, lesser-sung example of how seriously Apple takes its mission to make the world a better place, rather than merely entice us with shiny new tech.

We certainly can't wait to learn more about the applications of ResearchKit in the years to come. ■

by Benjamin Kerry & Gavin Lenaghan



American Heart Association®

BREASTCANCER.ORG

THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Stanford MEDICINE

Weill Cornell Medical College

army of women®
a program of the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation

AVON Foundation for Women

DANA-FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE

MGH 1811 MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

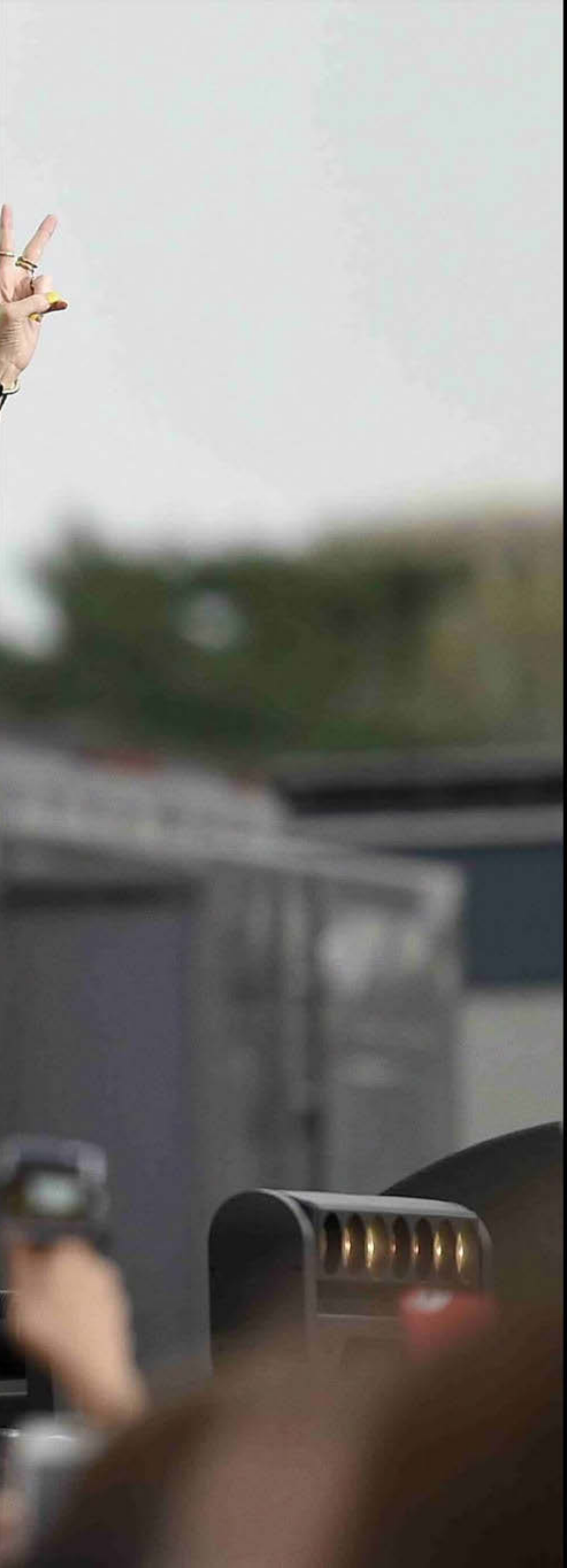
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER

susan G. komen®

首都医科大学宣武医院
Xuanwu Hospital Capital Medical University





“GWEN STEFANI, USHER PERFORM FOT THOUSANDS AT EARTH DAY RALLY”

A daylong Earth Day concert had R&B star Usher dancing on crutches Saturday on the National Mall to rally thousands for political action to confront climate change and poverty.

Usher, Mary J. Blige, Gwen Stefani, Common, Fall Out Boy and Train all performed during the free Global Citizen 2015 Earth Day rally hosted by will.i.am and Soledad O’Brien.



After suffering a fracture in his foot, Usher was in a cast but drew big cheers when he got his dance on anyway. He sang his hits, including “Yeah!” and “OMG” and also teamed up with Common to sing the beginning of “Glory,” the Oscar-winning song from the movie “Selma.”

“To end poverty, it starts, in my opinion, with an education about it,” Usher told the crowd. “I want you to go and investigate for yourself so that you can really understand what’s going on.”

The rally was a joint initiative of the Global Poverty Project and Earth Day Network. It coincides with meetings at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Usher joined the poverty project at the White House on Friday for a meeting with officials.

“I felt really good that the issues we are addressing here are on the table,” he told The Associated Press. After his performance, Usher said his passion is expanding education to help end poverty. But the impacts of climate change also have severe impacts on the world’s poor, he said.

“Global warming is something that obviously will affect all of us. Clean water and sanitation is something that is very real,” he said. “I understand and cannot turn a blind eye to what’s going on.”

For his part, will.i.am played host and said the huge turnout shows people are concerned.

“What I hope happens post the concert is that people go out and talk about some of the issues that we were spelling out today,” he said. “Talk about solutions, go online, dig deep and hold our leaders accountable for some of the things that they’re pledging.”

Backstage, Train frontman Patrick Monahan said he didn’t know much before about the environmental movement and the push to end extreme poverty. But now he wants to stay involved permanently.





"It's about all of us being aware but getting our hands dirty because it's not going to be an easy thing," Monahan said.

Monahan said he's been inspired by the charitable work of Coldplay's Chris Martin and the Global Poverty Project, which has set a goal to end extreme poverty by 2030.

Patrick Stump and Pete Wentz from Fall Out Boy played some of their hits and said they wanted to show their fans everyone has a responsibility to help.

"How do you wake up every day knowing that a lot of these things are within our grasp and just kind of be like oh, ok, whatever," Stump said. "It's frustrating. But I think we're here for the reality that it's hopeful. We can actually do something. We can actually effect change."

Wentz said issues around the environment and poverty will be as big as the citizens' demand during the upcoming presidential campaign.

"We're who elect our officials. We're who empower them," he said. "So if we care about them, and they're important to us, then they'll be important to the politicians running."

The rally also touched on global health and development needs. The U.S. Agency for International Development announced from the stage that it will commit $126 million to rebuild West African health care systems that were broken by the Ebola outbreak. The U.S. government already has spent $1.4 billion on the crisis to support 10,000 humanitarian responders and to provide equipment, laboratories and training. While Earth Day is officially on April 22, the Saturday rally asked participants to commit to making environmentally friendly "acts of green." Organizers also asked attendees to sign petitions for a U.N. conference on climate change planned for Paris in December.

ESPN SAYS VERIZON'S NEW FiOS TV PACKAGES VIOLATE AGREEMENTS



Breaking up the cable-TV bundle won't be easy.

ESPN is objecting to how Verizon is giving its FiOS TV customers more choice. In new plans that went into effect Sunday, Verizon made the ESPN and ESPN2 sports channels optional, but ESPN says its contracts with Verizon prohibit the channels from being in a separate sports package.

Although Verizon will still offer big bundles of channels, it has been facing pressure to reduce prices amid cheaper online options. So to target the cost-conscious, Verizon launched a FiOS plan that starts at $55 a month for a basic tier of 35 channels plus two themed channel packs. The basic channels that everyone gets include local broadcast stations, AMC, CNN and Food Network - but not ESPN or ESPN2.



There are currently seven add-on channel packs, focusing on such genres as sports, where ESPN and ESPN2 are, as well as children, pop culture and news. After picking two, customers can get additional channel packs for $10 each.

Verizon Communications Inc. did not respond to requests for comment Monday.

Media companies such as ESPN's owner, The Walt Disney Co., Time Warner Inc. and Viacom Inc. charge distributors such as Comcast, Dish and DirecTV and Verizon's FiOS for the rights to carry their channels. Those fees are typically based on how many subscribers the channels have. By making a channel optional, Verizon can keep costs down and charge only the subscribers that want it.




11:12 pm
Activities
Watch VCR
Watch DVR
Watch DVD
Watch TV
Play a Game
Media Center
Page -
1 of 4
Page +
MAIN
FAVORITES
LIGHTS
PREV CH
MUTE
VOL+
VOL-
MENU
CH+
CH-
GUIDE

ESPN is by far the most expensive basic cable network for distributors, according to estimates from data provider SNL Kagan. It gets $6.61 per average subscriber per month, compared with the No. 2, TNT, at $1.65.

Dish Network's Sling TV online service does carry ESPN and ESPN2 in the basic channel group of about 20 channels. Customers can get that for $20 a month and pay extra for additional channel packs, such as $5 for a set of additional sports channels.

Sony's PlayStation Vue, currently available only in New York City, Chicago and Philadelphia, doesn't provide ESPN or ESPN2 at all because the service has no distribution deal with Disney.







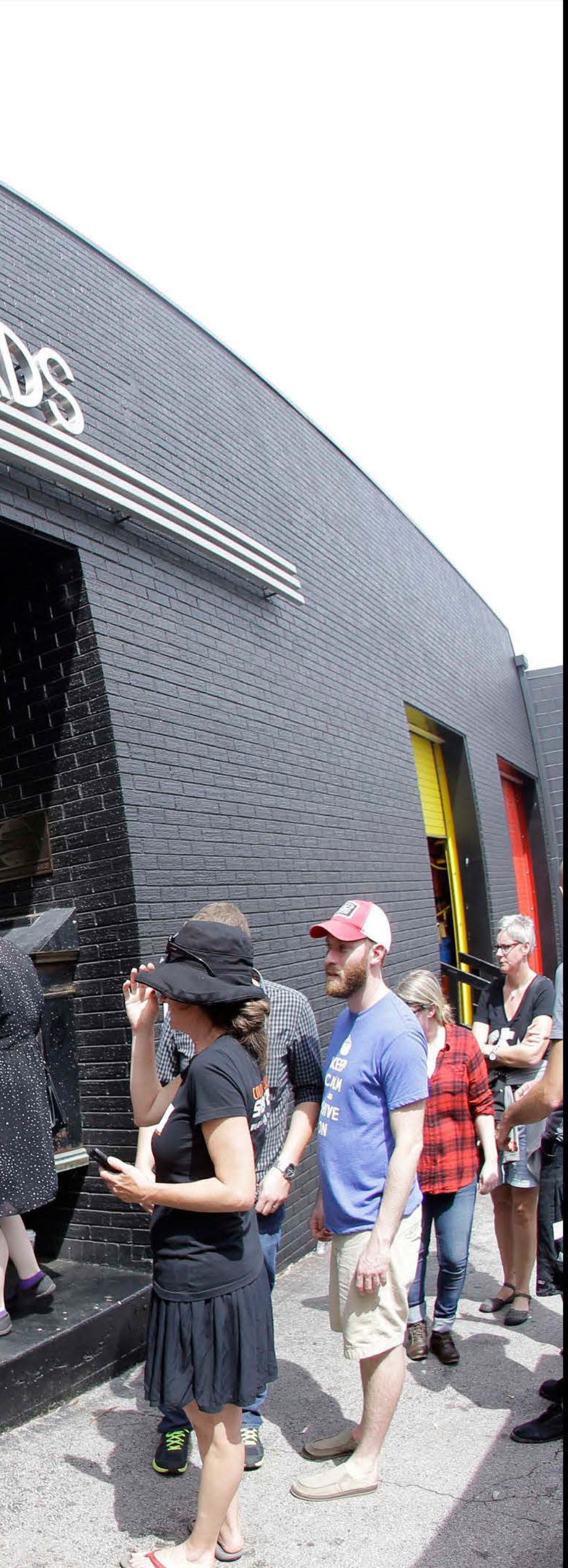
FACSIMILE OF FIRST ELVIS RECORDING RE-RELEASED BY JACK WHITE

After anonymously buying Elvis' first-ever recording at a January auction, Jack White is offering a limited-run vinyl re-release of "My Happiness" and "That's When Your Heartaches Begin" at his Third Man Records in Nashville.

The 10-inch, 78-rpm facsimile of the 1953 recording was digitally transferred from the original acetate onto new vinyl discs with no cleanup - pops, crackles and all.

"It's exactly what came off the grooves," Third Man's Ben Blackwell said.


THIRD MAN RECOR
623



The record is being sold in a plain paper sleeve because that's "what Elvis would have walked out of Sun with a record in," Blackwell said.

"Sun" is, of course, Sun Records, the legendary Memphis label operated by Sam Phillips. Presley paid $4 for the recording. Six decades later, White paid $300,000.

Super-fans camped out in front of Third Man beginning Friday morning to make sure they could get their hands on the Elvis record and other goodies available only for Record Store Day. That included the first commercially available vinyl edition of "Get Behind Me Satan" from White's former band The White Stripes. The original Elvis recording was on display at Third Man as well.

The first four people in line were mother-and-son teams from Cleveland and Indianapolis.

Christina Condor, said her love affair with White and his store began about three years ago when she saw him perform on "Saturday Night Live."

"I fell in love with his music and started buying more and more albums," she said. She also introduced her 24-year-old son Maxx Trevino to the scene.

Although she and Trevino make the 8-hour drive from Ohio every few months for special store events, she has glimpsed White only rarely on her trips to Nashville.

"I drove into the curb the first time I saw him," she said.

"She dented the bumper," Trevino said. "And there was a Beatles school-girl scream."

Nicholas Lynch, who was in line with his mother, Mary Page, said he moderates a Facebook page for collectors of Third Man's records. He estimated that at least 100 members of the group were in the line of about 700 people waiting for the store's 10 a.m. opening.


JACK WHITE
III
THIRD MAN
RECORDS AND NOVELTIES



Lynch also was one of about 50 customers who had been able to sign up online to relive the 18-year-old Elvis' recording experience by cutting his own single on a one-microphone, direct-to-acetate setup in Third Man's Blue Room.

He planned to play "Baby Please Don't Go" and then morph into the White Stripe's "Little Bird."

Once inside the store, Page said that she, Lynch and Lynch's girlfriend spent more than $500 on merchandise. That included a Record-Store-Day-only version of the White Stripes album with one red disc and one white disc. It also has a lenticular cover - one of those images that changes as you move it around.

Nonexclusive versions of the White Stripes album and the Elvis record will be released to a wider audience later this year, Blackwell said. Among the differences, the Elvis recording will be cleaned up and "Get Behind Me Satan" will be stamped on standard black vinyl.

But for collectors like Condor, Trevino, Lynch and Page, waiting in line for 26 hours for the exclusive versions was worth it.

"Why do we do it? Our love of Jack White," Condor said. "And Elvis too."

iTunes

Review



Trailer

Movies & TV Shows

Paddington



iTunes **Preview**

by Paul King
Genre: Kids & Family
Released: 2015
Price: $14.99

★★★★★
125 Ratings

Rotten **Tomatoes**
CERTIFIED FRESH 98%

The classic children's book character Paddington Bear finally makes his debut on the big screen, and he couldn't be more adorable in this live-action caper. The chatty and amiable animal - voiced by Ben Whishaw - turns up in London and meets the kindly Brown family, but also faces danger from a museum taxidermist (Nicole Kidman) who wants to add him to her collection.

FIVE FACTS:

1. The film is based on the Paddington Bear character created by Michael Bond.

2. The first book featuring the character, **A Bear Called Paddington, was published on October 13, 1958**.

3. The Paddington books have sold more than 35 million copies worldwide and have been translated into over 40 languages.

4. Other cast members in the film include Hugh Bonneville, Sally Hawkins, Julie Walters, Jim Broadbent and Peter Capaldi.

5. Colin Firth was initially cast as Paddington, **only to voluntarily drop out of the role after the studio decided that his voice was unsuitable**.

See more in iTunes



Interview with Nicole Kidman



Beyond the Reach

This adventure drama thriller centers on a high-rolling corporate shark, Madec (Michael Douglas), who recruits a young guide to take him into the Mojave Desert to hunt big game. However, when Madec ends up shooting and killing an innocent man, the guide's refusal to be drawn into a cover-up leads to a deadly game of cat-and-mouse.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Beyond the Reach was directed by Jean-Baptiste Léonetti, written by Stephen Susco and co-produced by Douglas.

2. It stars Douglas alongside Jeremy Irvine, with Ronny Cox playing The Sherriff.

3. Principal photography and production **took place in and around Farmington, New Mexico**.

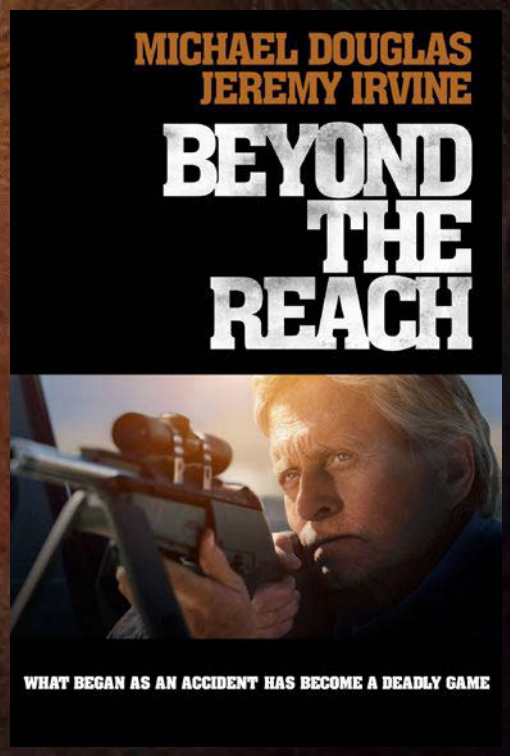
4. The film is based on Robb White's 1972 novel, Deathwatch.

5. It **premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 6, 2014**.



Trailer





iTunes Preview

by Jean-Baptiste Léonetti
Genre: Thriller
Released: 2015

★★★★★
30 Ratings

ND THE REACH



Interview with Michael Douglas and Jeremy Irvine




iTunes
Review
Music



iTunes **Preview**

Genre: Country
Released: Apr 14, 2015
12 Songs
Price: $9.99

★★★★½
2079 Ratings



Going Out Like That

Love Somebody

McEntire

The Queen of Country follows up her number one hit single on the Country iTunes Charts, "Going Out Like That", with the associated album. McEntire's first studio album since 2010's All the Women I Am and the 27th of her career, Love Somebody was produced by the Chockie, Oklahoma native herself, alongside Tony Brown, James Stroud and Doug Sisemore.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Reba Nell McEntire was born on March 28, 1955.

2. She released her first solo album in 1977.

3. She made a commercial breakthrough with the 1984 album My Kind of Country, which produced the two number one singles "How Blue" and "Somebody Should Leave".

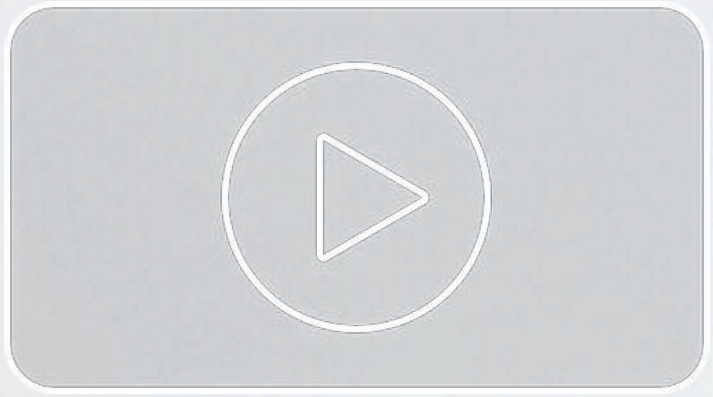
4. McEntire **has sold more than 80 million records worldwide**.

5. Of the recording process for Love Somebody, she has said: "Getting to work again with Allison Jones over at Nash Icon Records (part of the Big Machine Label group) was a blast! **We listened to thousands of songs to find just the right ones for this album.**"

See more in iTunes



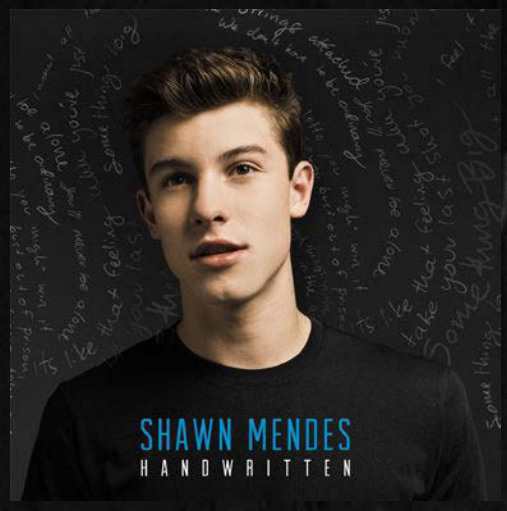




Interview with Reba McEntire

Handwritten (Deluxe)

Shawn Mendes



iTunes **Preview**

Genre: Pop
Released: Apr 14, 2015
16 Songs
Price: $9.99

★★★★★
5570 Ratings

It has been a rapid rise to prominence for the 16-year old Canadian, who only began posting song covers on the popular video sharing platform, Vine, two years ago. Now with two successful singles - "Life of the Party" and "Something Big" - under his belt, he follows up his debut EP, The Shawn Mendes EP, with this promising first studio album.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Shawn Peter Raul Mendes was born on August 8, 1998 in Toronto.

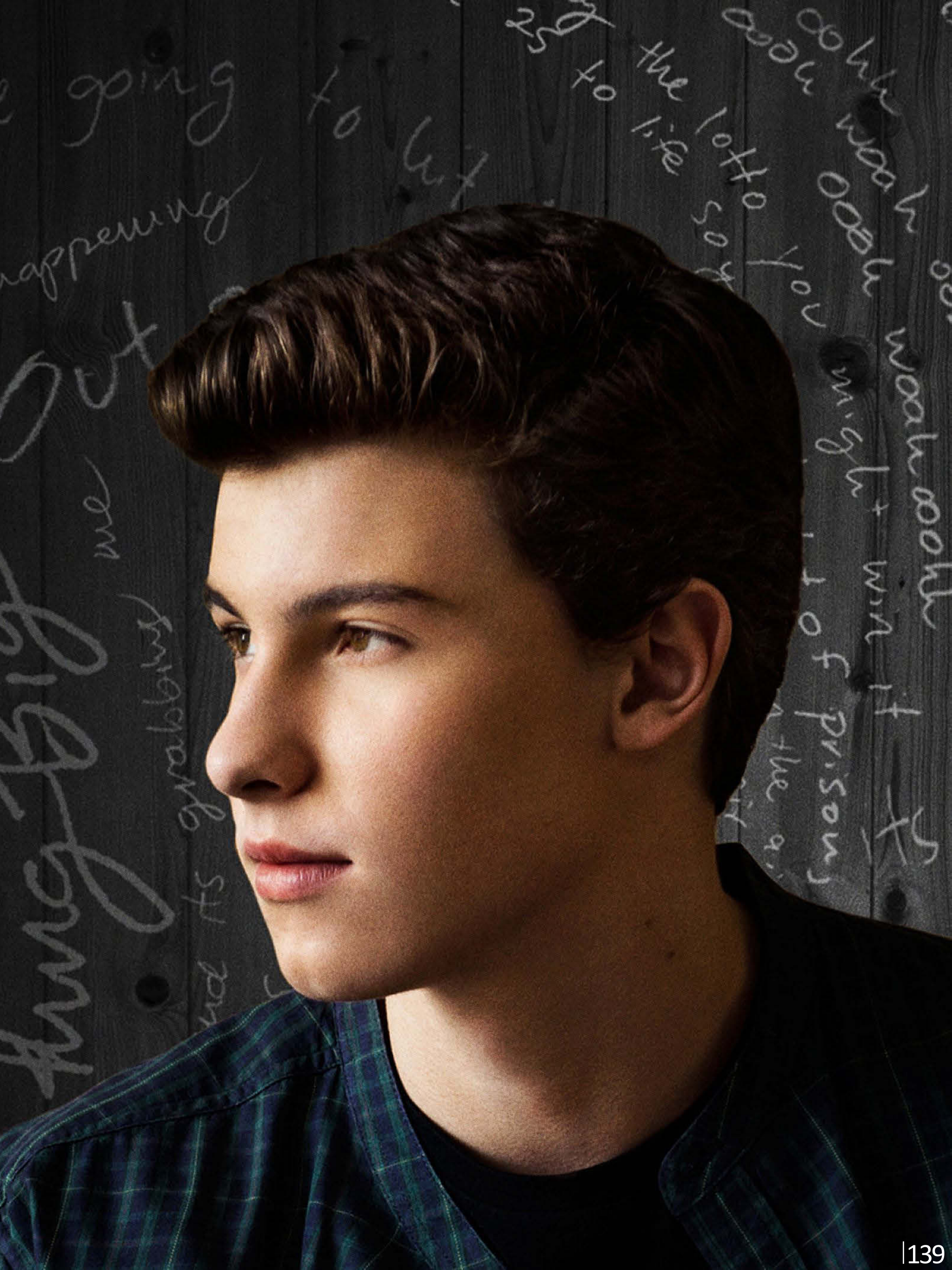
2. In 2014, he caught the attention of Island Records A&R Ziggy Chareton, which led to a deal with the record label.

3. "Life of the Party" charted in the top 10 in both Canada and New Zealand.

4. He is the **youngest artist to debut in the top 25 with a debut song** on the Billboard Hot 100.

5. Handwritten features the talents of such producers as Louis Biancaniello, Teddy Geiger, Martin Terefe and Sam Watters.

Life of the Party


going to
happening
What's going on
the lotto
life
so you
might win
prison
with


don't know



Something Big

YOUR BRAND HAS NEVER BEEN IN SUCH GOOD COMPANY



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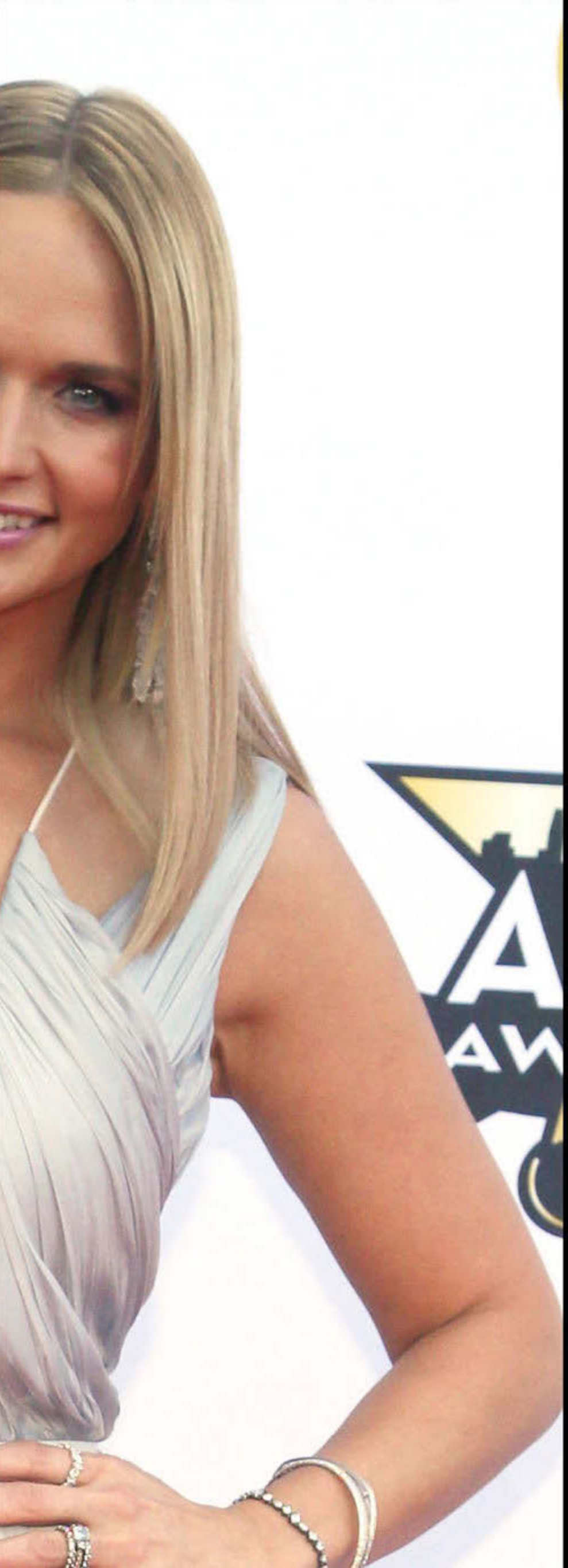
ACM AWARDS: MIRANDA LAMBERT, LUKE BRYAN, TAYLOR SWIFT SHINE

The 2015 Academy of Country Music Awards jam-packed more than three hours of music, from classic country stars such as George Strait and Alan Jackson to contemporary favorites Miranda Lambert and Luke Bryan and pop and rock stars Taylor Swift and Steven Tyler.

Even A-list celebrities and a football star took part as the awards show celebrated its 50th anniversary in a new location, the Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

Here's a breakdown of the top moments from Sunday night's show, which featured 23 performances.


ACM
AWARDS
50
YEARS



PRINCESS MIRANDA

Miranda Lambert is like the perennial winner actor Meryl Streep of country: She took home four Country Music Association Awards last year and the Grammy Award for best country album for “Platinum” this year.

And at Sunday’s ACM Awards, the native Texan won four awards and earned the 50th Anniversary Milestone Award.

“I was just proud in general of the show being here and kind of all the artists and fans got to see what we’re all about in Texas,” she said backstage. “That made me really happy. Like, my chest swelled up.”

Every album Lambert has released, aside from her 2005 debut “Kerosene,” has won the ACM Award for album of the year. This year was no exception, with “Platinum” taking the prize.

She also won her sixth consecutive female vocalist of the year Sunday and her third single record of the year (winning twice for the hit, “Automatic,” once as a singer and once as a songwriter).

Lambert was on a red-hot winning streak - and she rocked a red-hot bustier when she performed “Little Red Wagon.”

On the red carpet she wore a flowing, plunging dress, and inside the venue she donned white pants and a white top with a black sheer center.

LORD LUKE

Luke Bryan took home his second entertainer of the year award - but the singer says he’s not jaded about winning.

“I don’t think it’s a time for me to be smooth. I don’t think it’s a time for me to be suave. I think it’s a time for me to jump up and down and celebrate. These are the days,” Bryan said


ACM
AWARDS
50
YEARS
academy of country music
academy of country music



backstage. “When I’m an old guy rocking in a rock chair, I’m going to go, `You had a doggone good time.’ And that’s my approach.”

Bryan first won the honor in 2013. He won the entertainer of the year award at the Country Music Association Awards in November.

Bryan was a double winner Sunday night: He also picked up the ACM for vocal event of the year for “This How We Roll” with Florida Georgia Line.

The country star performed and hosted the show, for a third year, with Blake Shelton.

A SWIFT FAMILY AFFAIR

Taylor Swift returned to her country roots at the ACM Awards and celebrated with her mother and father.

A video package highlighting her career and success played before Swift was awarded the 50th Anniversary Milestone Award, also given to Lambert, Strait, Garth Brooks, Brooks & Dunn, Reba McEntire and Kenny Chesney.

Swift’s mother, who recently announced she is battling cancer, presented the award to her 25-year-old daughter with emotional words.

“I am a very proud mom,” said Andrea Swift, who also called Swift “brave enough to explore her musical curiosity.”

Taylor Swift thanked the country world for showing grace when she announced the release her first full-blown pop album, the top-selling “1989,” last year.

“I am so happy I learned how to write songs in a town like Nashville,” said Swift, who sat in the audience with her father, Scott Swift.



I’M NOT A COUNTRY SINGER, BUT…

The 2015 ACM Awards featured just about every country act alive - from Randy Travis to Trisha Yearwood to Alabama.

But artists from other worlds joined in to party: Christina Aguilera sang with Rascal Flatts, and Nick Jonas, formerly of the Jonas Brothers trio, performed his recent hits “Jealous” and “Chains” with the country duo Dan + Shay.

Others worked as presenters, such as Steven Tyler, Kelly Clarkson, Reese Witherspoon, Sofia Vergara and Tony Romo, who played football with Bryan and Shelton.

“This isn’t one of those deflated balls?” Shelton said after Bryan caught the ball, referencing the deflategate scandal earlier this year.

Online:

https://www.acmcountry.com

DE LA RENTA UNVEILS FIRST BRIDAL LINE SINCE DESIGNERS DEATH

Peter Copping had hoped to work alongside Oscar de la Renta, but it was not to be: Just days after Copping was hired last October as artistic director of the luxury label, the legendary de la Renta passed away from cancer.

In February, Copping presented his debut collection at New York Fashion Week, and on Saturday - barely two months later - he showed his first bridal line, a big occasion for a label known for dressing high-profile brides like Amal Clooney.





Luckily for Copping, who is British, the New York weather on Saturday was decidedly summery - perfect for brides. His collection retained much of the classic de la Renta glamour - lots of tulle and organza - but added a few more modern-looking silhouettes, some new takes on fabric work, and some silvery sequins. One of the most versatile looks came last, a white tiered ballgown in tulle with two bottom layers that were removable, to form a stylish minidress for dancing into the night.

Backstage after the show, Copping reflected on the collection. (The interview has been edited for length.)

eNews Magazine: You showed your first collection in February, and now this. Has it been a whirlwind?

Copping: Yes, it's tough to get it done in the time you have. But I did take some of the elements from the fall collection and brought them through into this one. Some of the ways we were working with fabrics for fall seemed really appropriate for bridal, so I thought it would be nice to use that as a stepping stone. For example, one dress was formed from lots of strips of organza; there was something very similar in a bordeaux (color) in the last show. So we did it in a lighter fabric here and we added lace as well.

eNews Magazine: You've spoken of the need to both preserve tradition in your new post, but also add in your own new touches. Did you do that here?





Copping: Yes, I think the way we treated some of the embroidery, and some of the silhouettes; you know it's just small touches, but small things can go a long way.

eNews Magazine: Anything absolutely new for you here?

Copping: I haven't done a lot of tulle like this, so that's quite new for me. I do think there a lot of women that do want that sort of princess gown. So that's really important, to cater to that clientele. And this (last gown) - we also made it very versatile, the two layers underneath can be removed and you end up with a very ballerina, swanlike dress. So that can be perfect for later in the evening when she wants to let loose and party. Also new is a lot of the ways lace is used - sometimes using strips of it. We were playing around with it a bit.

eNews Magazine: Do you feel there's less freedom in a bridal collection?

Copping: There are certain restrictions, but that's not a bad thing. I like to work within parameters sometimes. For example, not having to really worry about color! It was white or ivory, with little touches of silver. That's why we played around with the shoes, putting color there, and on some of the ribbons on the clothes.

eNews Magazine: It's still your first year at the label. Are you getting more comfortable?

Copping: Well, coming up is resort and then after that is the spring-summer collection. I think it's only going to be once I've done an entire year of collections that I'll really get a good handle on things.

eNews Magazine: Are you enjoying the move to New York?

Copping: I am. After 20 years in Paris, I quite surprised myself with how much I've settled in and am enjoying the city.



Image: Yuriko Nakao

JAPAN'S MAGLEV TRAIN BREAKS OWN SPEED RECORD AT 603 KPH

A Japanese maglev that is the fastest passenger train in the world has broken its own speed record.

Operator JR Central said the train reached 603 kilometers per hour (375 miles per hour) in a test run on Tuesday, surpassing its previous record of 361 mph (581 kph) set in 2003. The train traveled for just over a mile (1.8 kilometers) at a speed exceeding 600 kph (373 mph).

Japan's high-speed rail services are among the most advanced in the world, with hundreds of trains running each day with minimal delays. However, unlike regular shinkansen or bullet trains that run on steel rails, magnetic levitation trains hover above rails, suspended by powerful magnets.

The Maglev Test Line, near Mount Fuji about 80 kilometers (50 miles) west of Tokyo, is developing technology for use on a future 410-kilometer (250-mile) link that will reduce travel time between Tokyo and Osaka to just over an hour.


14. 34 km


502 km/h



Image: Junko Kimura

The current minimum by bullet train is nearly three hours.

The maglev trains, begun as a project of Japan Airlines and the national railways with government support, have undergone decades of testing. Construction of the Tokyo-Osaka link, which is expected to cost more than 9 trillion yen ($76 billion), began in 2014.

The line, which will mostly run under mountains, is due to begin operations in the late 2020s. A similar system operates in Shanghai, linking its airport in the seaside suburbs of Pudong to the city's subway system.







YAHOO'S 1Q SHOWS COMPANY REMAINS MIRED IN REVENUE RUT

Yahoo is still struggling to boost revenue nearly three years into CEO Marissa Mayer's tenure, magnifying concerns that the Internet company holds little value beyond its lucrative Asian investments.

The latest evidence of Yahoo's financial malaise emerged Tuesday with the release the company's first-quarter earnings report.

After accounting for ad commissions, Yahoo's revenue fell 4 percent from the same time last year to $1.04 billion, extending a troubling trend that began before Mayer took over. That downturn overshadowed an 8 percent increase in Yahoo's total revenue, before commissions, because investors focus on the amount of money that the company retains after paying its partners for helping to draw online traffic to it ads.

Those expenses, known as traffic acquisition costs, quadrupled from the same time last year, an indication that Yahoo is paying a steep price to show its advertising.

The Sunnyvale, California, company also poured substantially more money into developing new products, contributing to a steep drop in Yahoo's first-quarter earnings. Investors already had driven down the company's stock by 12 percent so far this year before Tuesday's numbers came out. The shares shed another 67 cents to $43.82 in extended trading.

Mayer has been trying to revive Yahoo since becoming CEO in July 2012, but her efforts have been mostly unsuccessful despite a boom in the digital advertising that generates most of the company's revenue. Most of the marketing money is still flowing to Google and Facebook - a pair of companies that have supplemented their powerful advertising networks with a variety of services and features that keep people coming back.

Things were supposed to change under Mayer, a respected executive who helped build Google into the Internet's most powerful company during her tenure there. But investors appear to be losing faith now that Yahoo's revenue, after ad commissions, has declined from the previous year in eight of the past nine quarters. The only uptick, in last year's third quarter, reflected a mere 1 percent increase in revenue.

Signaling her own dissatisfaction with the company's progress, Mayer recently reshuffled Yahoo's top management. She also re-negotiated the terms of Yahoo's 5-year-old search partnership with Microsoft Corp. to give Yahoo a bigger cut of the companies' shared revenue, more control over the results on Yahoo's site and the option to sell more ads through other networks besides Microsoft's.

Yahoo is amidst a multi-year transformation to return an iconic company to greatness, Mayer said Tuesday in a statement.





Although Yahoo's stock has nearly tripled under Mayer's leadership, the run-up hasn't been driven by the company's core business. Most of the increase has been tied to Yahoo's 24 percent stake in Alibaba Group, an e-commerce star in China. Yahoo's Alibaba holdings are currently worth $32 billion, accounting for about three-fourths of Yahoo's current market value.

Pressured by shareholders, Mayer in January announced plans to spin off the Alibaba stake into a separate company by the end of this year. The spinoff is designed to avoid paying a large tax bill on the gains from that investment.

Yahoo also owns a 35 percent stake in Yahoo Japan. The stake is currently worth nearly $9 billion, before the taxes on the gains that the company eventually will realize. Throw in the nearly $7 billion in cash and marketable securities that Yahoo held at the end of March, and the company's current market value of $42 billion implies investors think Yahoo's ongoing business is worth next to nothing.







BOX OFFICE TOP 20: 'FURIOUS 7' NEARS $300 MILLION



Newcomers "Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2" and "Unfriended" were still no match for "Furious 7" in its third week in release. Universal's high-octane movie took in $29.2 million, bringing its domestic total to a stunning $294.5 million. With $1.15 billion in worldwide receipts, "Furious 7" has become the seventh highest-grossing film of all time, behind "Iron Man 3."

Despite lackluster reviews, Sony's "Paul Blart" sequel opened stronger than expected with $23.8 million on a $30 million budget, while Universal and Blumhouse's micro-budget horror film "Unfriended" well surpassed its $1 million production budget, taking in $15.8 million in its first week in release.

Lionsgate's "Child 44," starring Tom Hardy, did not fare so well. The R-rated thriller opened to a disappointing $621,812 from 510 locations.

The top 20 movies at U.S. and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by Rentrak:



1. “Furious 7,” Universal, $29,156,595, 3,964 locations, $7,355 average, $294,510,675, 3 weeks.

2. “Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2,” Sony, $23,762,435, 3,633 locations, $6,541 average, $23,762,435, 1 week.

3. “Unfriended,” Universal, $15,845,115, 2,739 locations, $5,785 average, $15,845,115, 1 week.

4. “Home,” 20th Century Fox, $10,608,947, 3,488 locations, $3,042 average, $142,917,827, 4 weeks.

5. “The Longest Ride,” 20th Century Fox, $7,020,782, 3,371 locations, $2,083 average, $23,681,298, 2 weeks.

6. “Get Hard,” Warner Bros., $4,944,381, 2,655 locations, $1,862 average, $78,393,149, 4 weeks.

7. “Woman In Gold,” The Weinstein Company, $4,596,287, 2,011 locations, $2,286 average, $15,951,799, 3 weeks.

8. “Monkey Kingdom,” Disney, $4,577,861, 2,012 locations, $2,275 average, $4,577,861, 1 week.

9. “The Divergent Series: Insurgent,” Lionsgate, $4,096,952, 2,542 locations, $1,612 average, $120,552,425, 5 weeks.

10. “Cinderella,” Disney, $4,025,469, 2,414 locations, $1,668 average, $186,478,482, 6 weeks.

11. “True Story,” Fox Searchlight, $1,950,214, 831 locations, $2,347 average, $1,950,214, 1 week.


WEST ORANGE
MALL
SECURITY
GUARD



12. “While We’re Young,” A24 Films, $1,438,384, 713 locations, $2,017 average, $4,006,203, 4 weeks.

13. “Danny Collins,” Bleecker Street, $893,551, 648 locations, $1,379 average, $3,881,050, 5 weeks.

14. “It Follows,” Radius-TWC, $820,187, 941 locations, $872 average, $13,281,332, 6 weeks.

15. “Ex Machina,” A24 Films, $798,661, 39 locations, $20,478 average, $1,126,277, 2 weeks.

16. “Kingsman: The Secret Service,” 20th Century Fox, $678,874, 556 locations, $1,221 average, $125,659,122, 10 weeks.

17. “Child 44,” Lionsgate, $621,812, 510 locations, $1,219 average, $621,812, 1 week.

18. “American Sniper,” Warner Bros., $379,718, 445 locations, $853 average, $347,762,902, 17 weeks.

19. “Do You Believe?,” Pure Flix, $368,013, 449 locations, $820 average, $12,227,429, 5 weeks.

20. “SpongeBob Squarepants: Sponge Out Of Water,” Paramount, $357,715, 328 locations, $1,091 average, $161,709,302, 11 weeks.


SECURITY
NATIONAL

PRIVACY ADVOCATES SEEK MORE OPENNESS ON NSA SURVEILLANCE



As Congress considers whether to extend the life of a program that sweeps up American phone records, privacy advocates and civil liberties groups say too much about government surveillance remains secret for the public to fully evaluate the program's reach or effectiveness.

The disclosure two years ago of the National Security Agency's surveillance efforts prodded the federal government to declassify reams of once-secret documents, including opinions from a secretive intelligence court laying out the program's origins and legal underpinnings. But critics say key language from the disclosed documents remains censored, the release of information has been selective, and the ongoing trickle of once-secret memos has raised concerns about how many other potentially illuminating documents might yet remain outside the public's reach.

"That means the public lacks information it needs to understand the significance of the powers that government already has and the significance of the powers that the government is asking for," said Jameel Jaffer, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

The NSA program that collects and stores phone records is conducted under Section 215 of the USA Patriot Act. The extent of its reach remained secret until Edward Snowden, a former NSA systems administrator, disclosed details of the surveillance in 2013. Amid a public backlash, President Barack Obama has proposed that the NSA stop collecting the records in bulk and instead request them from phone companies as needed for terrorism investigations. Congress is now deciding whether to renew or modify the phone records collection when the law authorizing it expires in June. Legislation is expected to be unveiled Wednesday in the House.

Intelligence officials say the program - it collects the "to" and "from" information on phone calls but not their content - is critical to detecting terrorist plots and have sought to justify it through the ongoing declassification of materials, including from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. Among documents released are court opinions outlining how the NSA was first authorized to start collecting bulk phone and Internet records in the hunt for al-Qaida terrorists, previously classified testimony from intelligence officials and NSA analyst training materials.

The disclosures far surpass available public information on other secret programs such as targeted drone strikes against terror suspects. But there are gaps in the information that privacy advocates say prevent the public from being able to fully judge the program's effectiveness, including the extent to which Section 215 has been construed to allow for other types of bulk collection. Knowing how the government interprets its surveillance authorities, and how broadly they reach, is critical, advocates say.

"If the government is asking for the renewal of this authority, the public has a right to know at least in general terms how the authority is being used, and right now the public doesn't have that," Jaffer said.







Last month, a federal judge in New York held in a public records lawsuit that the government could lawfully withhold any secret ruling regarding the use of Section 215 to collect records other than bulk phone records. The judge, William Pauley, said the government had "offered a reasoned and persuasive argument for withholding" information that should not be second-guessed. In that same case, the Justice Department last year released a couple dozen surveillance court rulings but refused to turn over unspecified others, the exact number of which it said was classified.

The government continues to pull back the curtain with periodic new disclosures, such as the Justice Department's release in January of a 5-year-old memo that said the Commerce Department was not obligated under Section 215 to turn over confidential census data to federal law enforcement. But such disclosures, though welcomed by civil liberties groups, also hint at how much might still be unknown.

The NSA program has also highlighted broader concerns about what privacy advocates say is the

federal government's overreliance on secretive court rulings and classified legal memos. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee who opposes the bulk phone records collection, said while he believed the government had released enough information about the law - albeit under pressure - for an informed debate, he was nonetheless concerned about the role of secret legal interpretations.

Though intelligence agencies should be able to conduct secret operations, he said, "they shouldn't be following secret law."

Stephen Vladeck, an American University law professor, said it was possible that the debate about the phone records program distracts attention from other surveillance efforts that are perhaps more secretive, such as Executive Order 12333, which authorizes foreign intelligence collection overseas without a court order. He also said he thought the government had provided substantial information about what information it was collecting, but was less forthcoming about how that information was used.

"The conversation about collection and a conversation about use are very different conversations," he said. "And to have one without the other is to, I think, underappreciate the privacy consequences of each."

Liza Goitein, co-director of the liberty and national security program at the Brennan Center for Justice, said it was impossible to know how much information might be out there absent a complete index of how many memos, opinions or court orders even exist.

"We shouldn't be satisfied that we know everything" because, Goitein said, "we have no way to assess that we know everything."



COUNTRY AWARDS HELP CBS DOMINATE RATINGS



With Miranda Lambert, Luke Bryan and Taylor Swift leading the way, country music helped CBS to a dominant week in the television ratings.

The Academy of Country Music Awards was seen by just under 16 million viewers, making it the most-watched program in the Nielsen company's weekly accounting of popular TV shows. Lambert won four awards, Bryan was named top entertainer and Swift accepted an award for her career's work presented by her mother, who recently announced she was battling cancer.

The ACM awards may have won the week, but finished just behind the yearly Country Music Association awards. That show, aired during a busier TV time in November, had 16.25 million viewers last year.

Nielsen's weekly list measures how many people watched a program live or before midnight on the same night, and doesn't include delayed viewing beyond that. That gives an edge to live programming like awards shows.

Fourteen of the 17 most-watched shows last week aired on CBS, Nielsen said.


U N G-





ABC's "World News Tonight" defeated NBC's "Nightly News" in the ratings for the third straight week after ending an NBC winning streak that began in 2009. NBC News is still mulling the future of suspended "Nightly News" anchor Brian Williams.

CBS averaged 9.6 million viewers in prime time. ABC was second with 6.1 million viewers, NBC had 5 million, Fox had 3.6 million, Univision had 2.5 million, the CW had 1.6 million, Telemundo had 1.3 million and ION Television had 1.1 million.

Fox News Channel was the most popular cable network on a week where Hillary Clinton and Marco Rubio launched presidential bids, averaging 1.66 million viewers. USA had 1.64 million, the Disney Channel had 1.62 million, TBS had 1.61 million and TNT had 1.5 million.

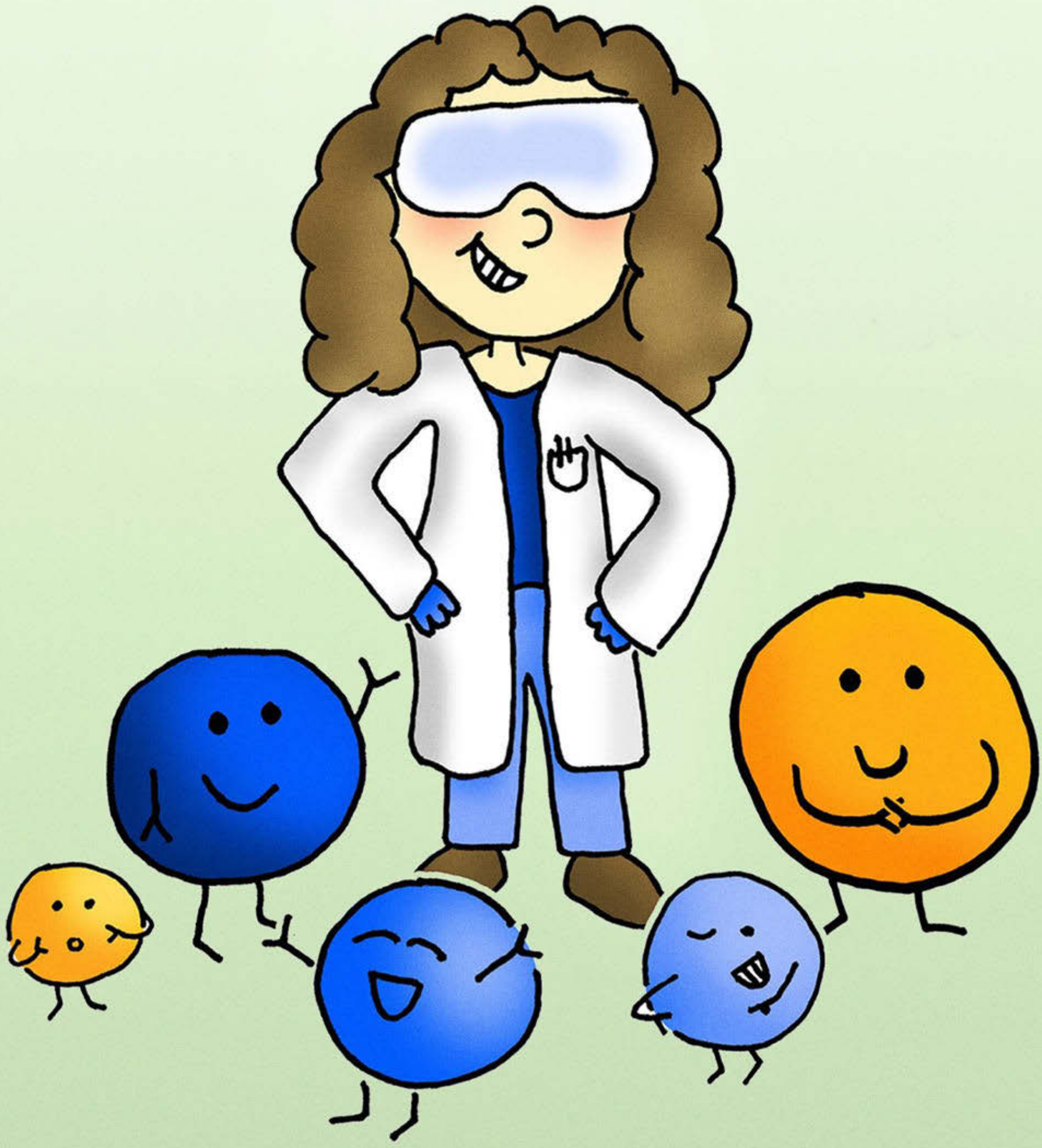
ABC's "World News Tonight" averaged 7.9 million viewers last week, NBC's "Nightly News" had 7.7 million and the "CBS Evening News" had 6.8 million.

For the week of April 13-19, the top 10 shows, their networks and viewerships: "Academy of Country Music Awards," CBS, 15.98 million; "NCIS," CBS, 15.84 million; "The Big Bang Theory," CBS, 14.82 million; "NCIS: New Orleans," CBS, 14.4 million; "Dancing With the Stars," ABC, 13.89 million; "The Voice" (Monday), NBC, 11.04 million; "The Voice" (Tuesday), NBC, 10.7 million; "Criminal Minds," CBS, 10.37 million; "60 Minutes," CBS, 10 million; "The Odd Couple," CBS, 9.62 million.

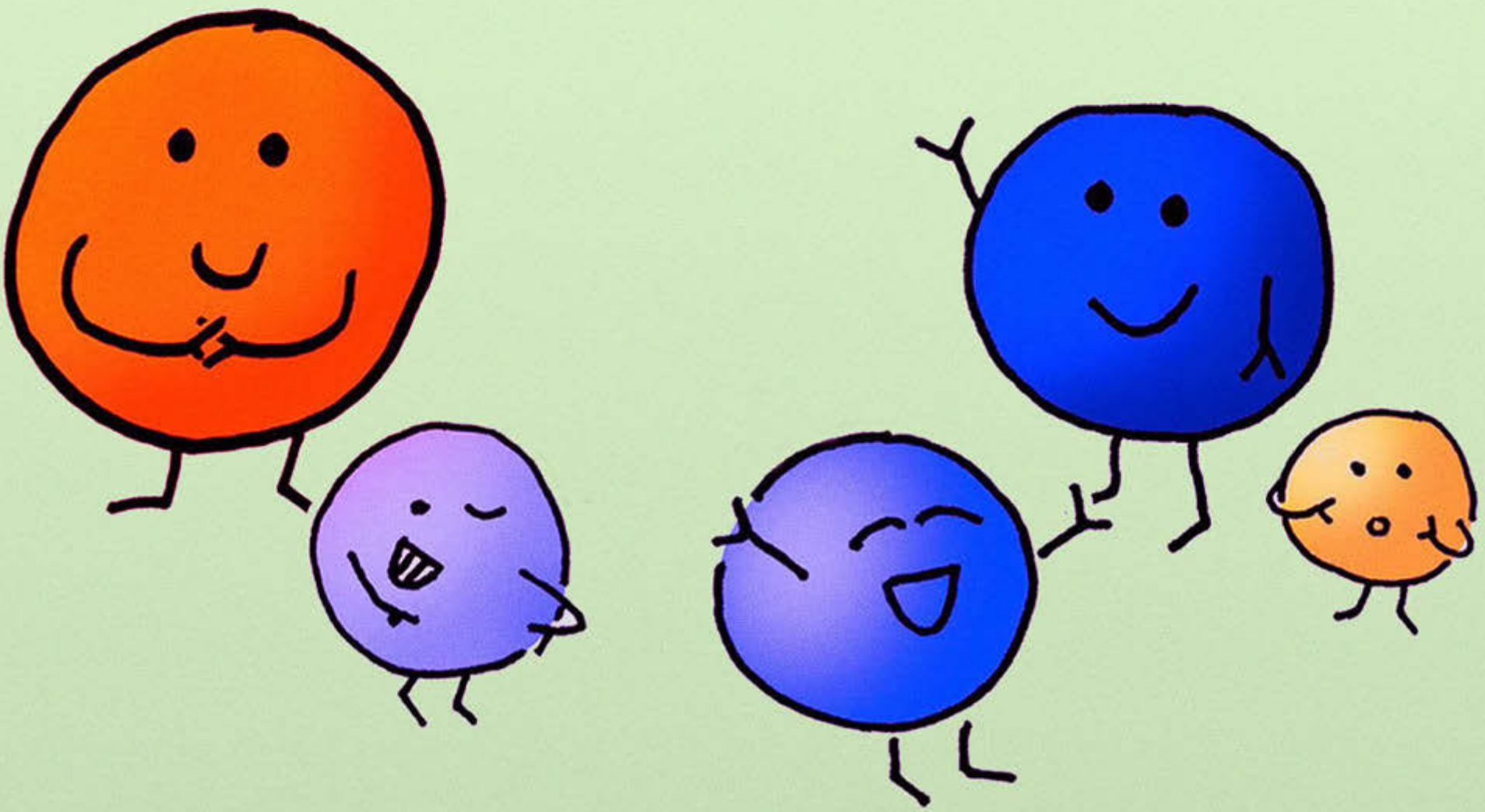
ABC is owned by The Walt Disney Co. CBS is owned by CBS Corp. CW is a joint venture of Warner Bros. Entertainment and CBS Corp. Fox is owned by 21st Century Fox. NBC and Telemundo are owned by Comcast Corp. ION Television is owned by ION Media Networks.

Online: **http://www.nielsen.com**

SCIENCE



CHEMISTRY PH.D. STUDENT ILLUSTRATES HER THESIS IN COMIC BOOK



Late last spring, a doctoral student worked late into the night. As she doodled, her chemistry thesis took on a life of its own, transforming into a comic book.

Veronica Berns, 28, was working on her Ph. D. in chemistry at the University of Wisconsin -Madison. Berns said she long struggled to explain her work to her parents and friends. The self-described comic book fan said she began drafting her thesis on quasicrystals - a subset of crystals that diverge from the usual structural characteristics of crystals. Berns quickly concluded that she would be best able to describe the oddball compounds with illustrations.

“They’re not very well-polished illustrations. That’s on purpose,” Berns said. “I wanted it to be like I’m explaining on the back of an envelope.”

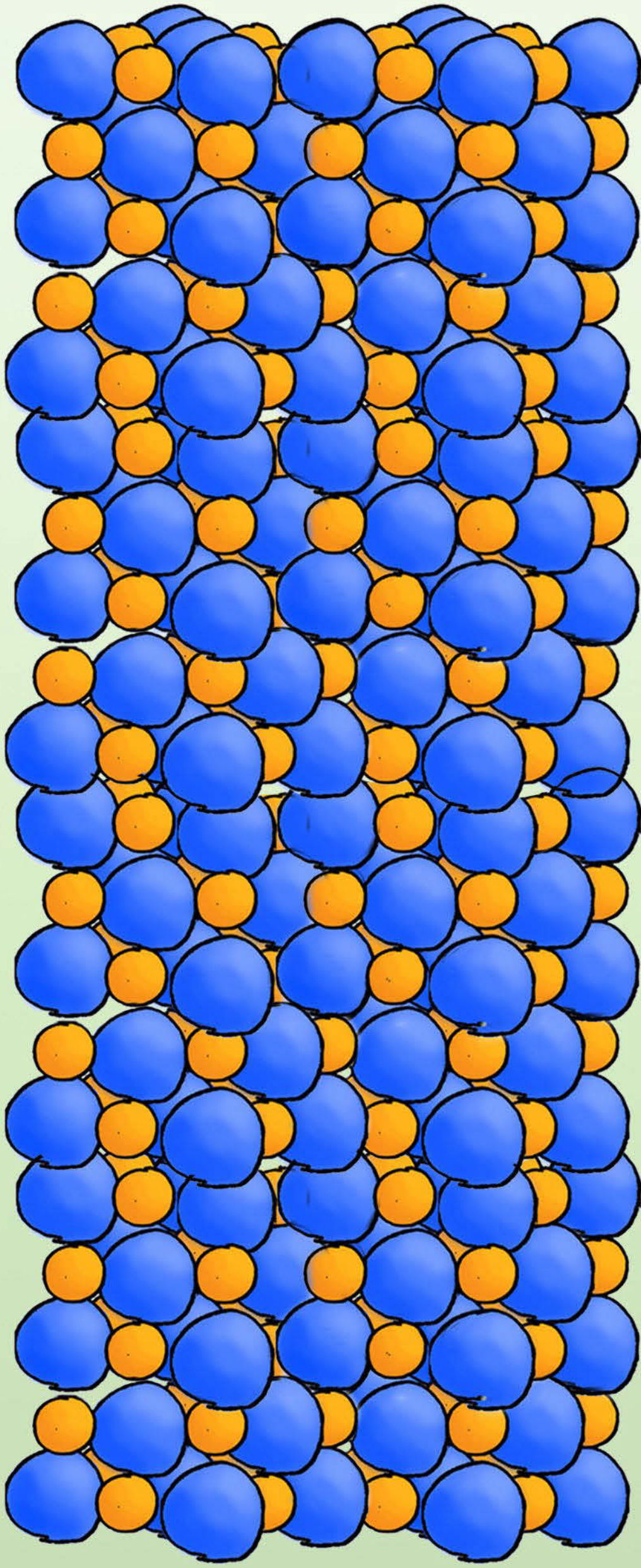
And on many occasions, it was on the back of an envelope or on a napkin that she doodled sketches of the chemical bonds to better show her parents what she was working on in the lab. Jody Berns, Veronica’s mother, said their family has a history of doodling and has shared comics for years.

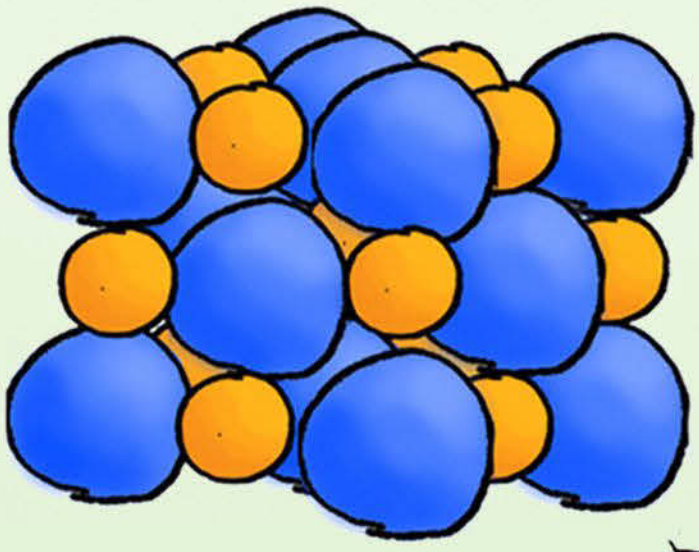
Berns surprised her family with her comic book “Atomic Size Matters” at her graduation last year. The book depicts cartoons of Berns wearing various costumes and uses humor as well as simple comparisons to describe elaborate chemistry.

“We’re just really proud that she can take something so complex and put it into a fun visual explanation that everyone can enjoy,” Jody Berns said.

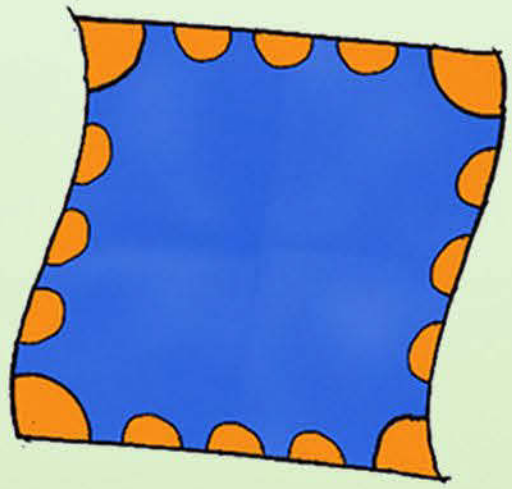
Veronica Berns’ professor Danny Fredrickson said Berns was the first of his students to construct her thesis in an artistic way. He said often it is difficult for scientists to explain what they do with proper context.

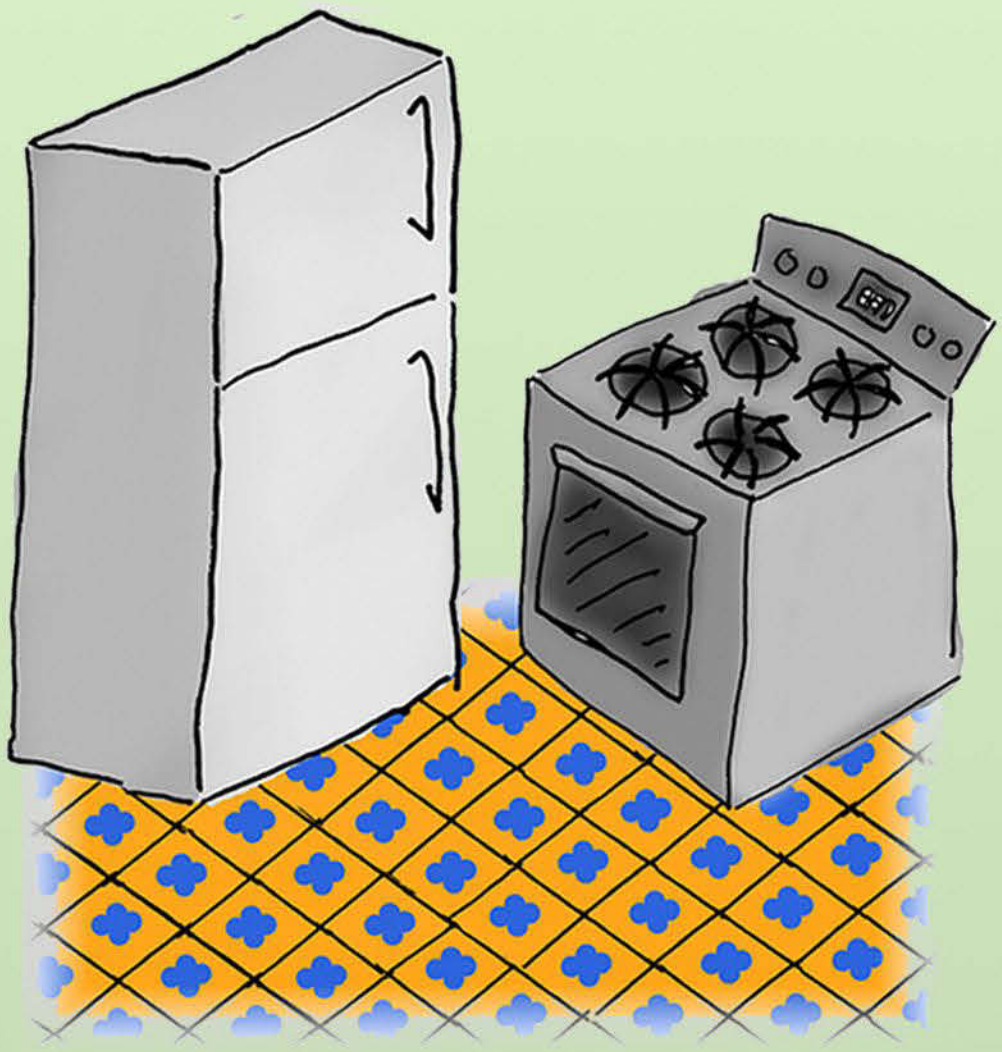
“If it’s worth doing, we should be able to explain it,” Fredrickson said.











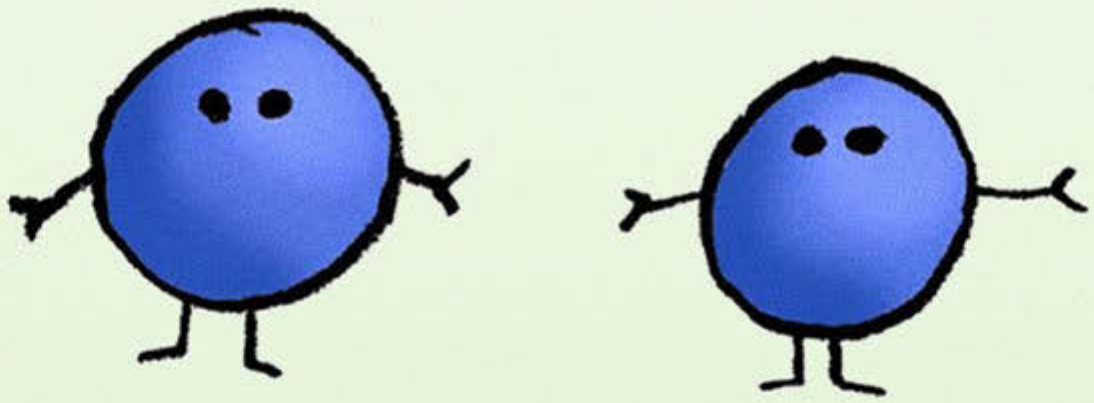


And he said Berns managed to accomplish that.

Berns said she hopes other scientists will find ways to illustrate what they're doing in the lab. She now lives in Chicago and works as a chemist. Berns also writes a blog in which she uses comics to explain the work of Nobel Prize winning scientists.

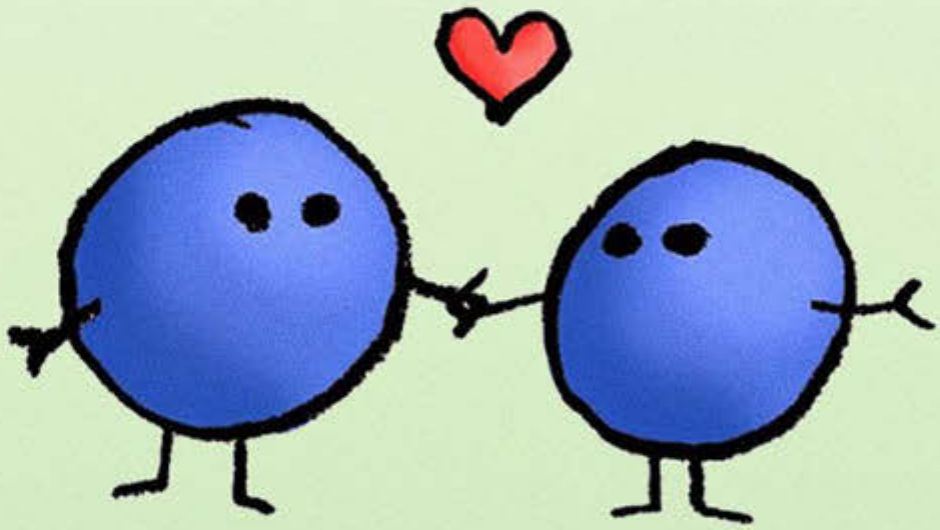
Berns started a Kickstarter fundraising campaign to finance printing a small batch of the books. She said she wanted to raise $5,965 to cover the costs of professional printing. The website says she has raised more than $14,000.





LET'S SAY THAT WE HAVE TWO HYDROGEN ATOMS.
JUST THE TWO HYDROGEN ATOMS, AND NOTHING ELSE NEARBY.

THE BONDING POTENTIAL TELLS YOU HOW MUCH THE HYDROGENS BENEFIT FROM BEING NEAR ONE ANOTHER: FROM CHEMICALLY BONDING.



Health





DISNEY MEASLES OUTBREAK THAT SPARKED VACCINATION DEBATE ENDS



An outbreak of measles that popped up at Disneyland in late December soon spread to six other U.S. states, Mexico and Canada. Health officials suspect an infected traveler, who caught the virus overseas, visited the theme park and exposed others.

The outbreak sickened 147 people in the U.S., including 131 in California. No deaths were reported.

The California Department of Public Health on Friday declared the outbreak over after no new cases appeared in the last 42 days, or two incubation periods.

HOW IT STARTED

The identity of the person responsible for spreading measles at Disney theme parks in Southern California will likely forever remain a mystery. Because there haven't been homegrown measles cases in the U.S. for more than a decade, health experts believe the virus came from abroad where the airborne disease is still common.

The outbreak probably began with a cough or sneeze. Measles is highly contagious and spreads easily through the air and in closed spaces. Infected droplets can linger for up to two hours after the sick person leaves.

HOW IT SPREAD

Health officials said 42 people were exposed to measles while visiting or working at Disneyland in December. More than two dozen family members or close friends fell ill after coming into contact with the initial cases.

Other places were hit with the virus, including hospitals, malls, airports and schools. About 20 percent of patients were hospitalized.





There were cases where the source was unknown. Because the measles strain was the same, health officials consider them part of the Disneyland outbreak.

WHY IT GOT ATTENTION

Measles outbreaks are relatively rare in the U.S. Past outbreaks mainly occurred in communities with low vaccination rates.

The Disneyland outbreak occurred at a major tourist destination filled with visitors from around the globe. People who were infected at the theme parks then traveled home with the virus, where it continued to spread.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

Disease investigators tracked down thousands of people potentially exposed to measles. Those considered at-risk received the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine. Sick patients were asked to place themselves in isolation until the infectious period passed. Schools sent unvaccinated students home.

Health experts said the quick response prevented the outbreak from getting worse.

“They did a tremendous job,” said Dr .James Cherry, an infectious disease expert at the University of California, Los Angeles.





THE VACCINE DEBATE

The outbreak cast a spotlight on the anti-vaccine movement. Parents who oppose vaccines for their children for personal reasons found themselves on the defensive.

As infections mounted, several state legislatures tried to make it harder for parents to opt out of vaccinations.

In California, a bill that would prevent parents from seeking vaccine exemptions for their children because of personal beliefs generated heated discussion in Sacramento. A vote was delayed until next week.





THEY WILL BE BACK: SEQUELS MULTIPLY IN SUMMER MOVIE SEASON

"I'll be back," the line Arnold Schwarzenegger first uttered more than 30 years ago in that indelible manly monotone, belongs to the Terminator, of course. But it also might as well be the official slogan of the summer movie season.

It's the time of year when Hollywood's older, reliable brands, with the tenacity of Schwarzenegger's lethal cyborg, claw their way back onto the big screen in a popcorn parade of big-budget sequels, reboots and re-dos. That's nothing new, but the extent of the sequel spinning is.

The sequel expansion - as headlong as Tom Cruise in the "Mission: Impossible" movies - runs in all directions, stretching into prequels, second-try reboots, spinoffs and franchises that are less linear, roman-numeral progressions than (as in the brimming Marvel world) whole universes of overlapping characters: fantasy realms to visit, not just stories to follow.

To fuel the proliferation, Hollywood is dipping ever deeper into its vaults: 10 of this summer's

most anticipated blockbusters have origins dating back more than three decades, including "Fantastic Four," "The Man From U.N.C.L.E.," "Mad Max: Fury Road" and "Terminator: Genisys," the fifth film in the series created by James Cameron in 1984. Schwarzenegger is back to say that he's back.

Nostalgia and familiarity mingle with updated special effects and new cast members in these films to render something that hopefully feels fresh to moviegoers. As the "Fast and Furious" series (more profitable in its seventh installment than ever before) has proven this spring, the lifespan of the sequels no longer adheres to the old rules of inevitable decay - at least for now.

The ever-lengthening life of franchises can make for some strange off-screen realities, and not just for 67-year-old Terminators. "Mad Max: Fury Road" (May 15), is returning decades later with its original creator, the Australian director George Miller.

"One of the most jolting experiences of my life was to go to SXSW and watch `Road Warrior: Mad Max 2' in a newly minted print for the first time in 32 years and then showing scenes from `Fury Road' all these years later," says Miller. "It was a kind of a time travel. It was a strange but powerful experience."

There is blunt mathematics behind the proliferating franchises. The top six summer films at the box office in 2013 were sequels. Last summer, all of the top 10 movies were sequels, reboots or hailed from well-known properties.

This summer, the box-office seems nearly certain to be led by "Avengers: Age of Ultron" (May 1), the sequel to the 2012 superhero team-up original, the highest grossing-summer movie ever. With $1 billion-plus in box office assured, the financial imperative is, of course, enormous. "Age of Ultron" writer-director Joss Whedon says







"making more money would be swell," but a creative purpose is still necessary.

"I wanted to do better," says Whedon. "I wanted to spend more time with these guys. I just introduced them, and the movie ended. I wanted to spend time with them as a team, as comrades, with them in conflict and the fun and the humor and the pain that comes with that. I wanted to go deeper."

While Marvel's "Avengers" marches forward (a two-part sequel is planned), other franchises have progressed less predictably.

"Magic Mike," made for just $7 million, opened in June 2012 with a remarkable $39.1 million and went on to gross $167 million worldwide. A male stripper romp that winks to the real past of producer-star Channing Tatum, it returns July 1 with "Magic Mike XXL." It's the classic kind of sequel - a road trip - albeit one with an especially untraditional destination: a Florida stripper convention Tatum attended before his acting career took off.

The premise still makes director Gregory Jacobs chuckle.

"We started thinking about a sequel, honestly, really early on," says Jacobs, a producer and assistant director on the first "Magic Mike." "We all loved this idea of a road trip with these guys; we just couldn't fit it into the first movie."

"Magic Mike XXL" is joined by a handful of sequels that come from fairly recent films: the teen musical "Pitch Perfect 2" on May 15; the "Despicable Me" spinoff "Minions" on July 10; Seth MacFarlane's comedy "Ted 2" on June 26. But the bulk of the summer season will depend on older franchises.





Some of them are counting on moviegoer amnesia. “Jurassic World” (June 12), stuck in development for a decade, is the fourth installment in the franchise that has been dormant (but not extinct) since 2001’s “Jurassic Park III.” Its star, Chris Pratt, led last summer’s runaway hit, “Guardians of the Galaxy.”

“Fantastic Four” (Aug. 7), starring Miles Teller and Michael B. Jordan, is an attempt to reboot the Marvel foursome after the little loved “Fantastic Four” gave it a go just 10 years ago, and was followed by a 2007 “Silver Surfer” sequel.

The futuristic “Tomorrowland” (May 22), directed by Brad Bird (“Ratatouille,” “The Incredibles”) and co-starring George Clooney, comes from the producers behind “Pirates of the Caribbean” and hopes to turn another Disney theme park attraction into a massive franchise.

“Mission: Impossible Rogue Nation” (July 31), the fifth entry to the Tom Cruise action series, isn’t the only film trading off an old television show. “The Man From U.N.C.L.E.” (Aug. 14) is Guy Ritchie’s take on the `60s spy series. HBO’s “Entourage” (June 5) will also get a big-screen swan song about four years after the show’s finale. With so many name-brand films clustered together in the summer, box-office analysts like Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Rentrak, predicts this season will lead Hollywood to a record year. That would be welcome news for the industry, following a limp 2014 summer.

If summer 2015 is to reverse last summer’s downturn, it will need a few of the original films to pop, too. One thing 2015 has over 2014 is a Pixar movie. After a year off, Pixar will release “Inside Out,” about the voices inside the mind of a young girl, on June 19. The comedy options, too, may be better. “Spy” (June 5) stars Melissa McCarthy in a spoof thriller, and “Trainwreck” (July 17), from director Judd Apatow, stars Amy Schumer as a monogamy-averse career woman.

HEAD OF MOVIE ASSOCIATION PREDICTS RECORD YEAR AT BOX OFFICE



It matters where you watch a movie, the head of the Motion Picture Association of America stressed Tuesday at the opening of an annual gathering of theater owners in Las Vegas.

Chris Dodd, chairman and CEO of the association, also said piracy and illegal downloading remain top concerns for the industry, especially with 2015 expected to be a record-breaking year at the worldwide box office.

At stake, Dodd said, are the jobs of 1.9 million American workers who depend on the success of the film and television industry.


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Those workers are the ones whose “faces we will never see on a movie screen, who will never walk a red carpet.” he said.

Dodd used the opportunity to promote the newly launched website **http://www.wheretowatch.com** , a search platform presented by the six member studios of the MPAA to provides information on where films can be seen legally online or in theaters.

But the major theme of the presentation was the upcoming slate of movies.

National Association of Theater Owners President John Fithian noted a number of reasons that 2015 will be a banner year, including the fact that studios are finally embracing the entire calendar year for releases.

“Clint Eastwood presented serious drama in January, February is a great time for love,” said Fithian, referencing high-earners “American Sniper” and “Fifty Shades of Grey.”

In a year that includes blockbuster releases such as “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” “Avengers: Age of Ultron,” and “Jurassic World,” Fithian said there will be “at least four, and maybe six, billion-dollar global movies spread across the year.”

Key, though, is the fact that there are more films with women at the center, and more films that appeal to all ages. Films such as “Cinderella,” “Insurgent” and “Fifty Shades of Grey” had women in leading roles and women making up 60 percent of the ticket-buying audience.

“Personally I’m so pleased that my daughter can see more women in leading roles than ever before,” he said.

CinemaCon runs through Thursday.


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JAKE GYLLENHAAL, SIENNA MILLER ON CANNES FILM FESTIVAL JURY

Prize winners at the Cannes Film Festival will be chosen by a jury that includes American actor Jake Gyllenhaal, Mexican director Guillermo del Toro and Canadian filmmaker Xavier Dolan.

Malian musician Rokia Traore is also on the panel, announced Tuesday, along with British actress Sienna Miller, French performer Sophie Marceau and Spanish actress Rossy de Palma, a frequent performer in the films of Pedro Almodovar.

The jury is led by filmmaking brothers Joel and Ethan Coen.

The French Riviera film extravaganza opens May 13 with French director Emmanuelle Bercot's drama "La Tete Haute" and runs to May 24.

New movies by Gus Van Sant, Nanni Moretti, Jia Zhangke and Jacques Audiard are among the films competing for the festival's top prize, the coveted Palme d'Or.

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